

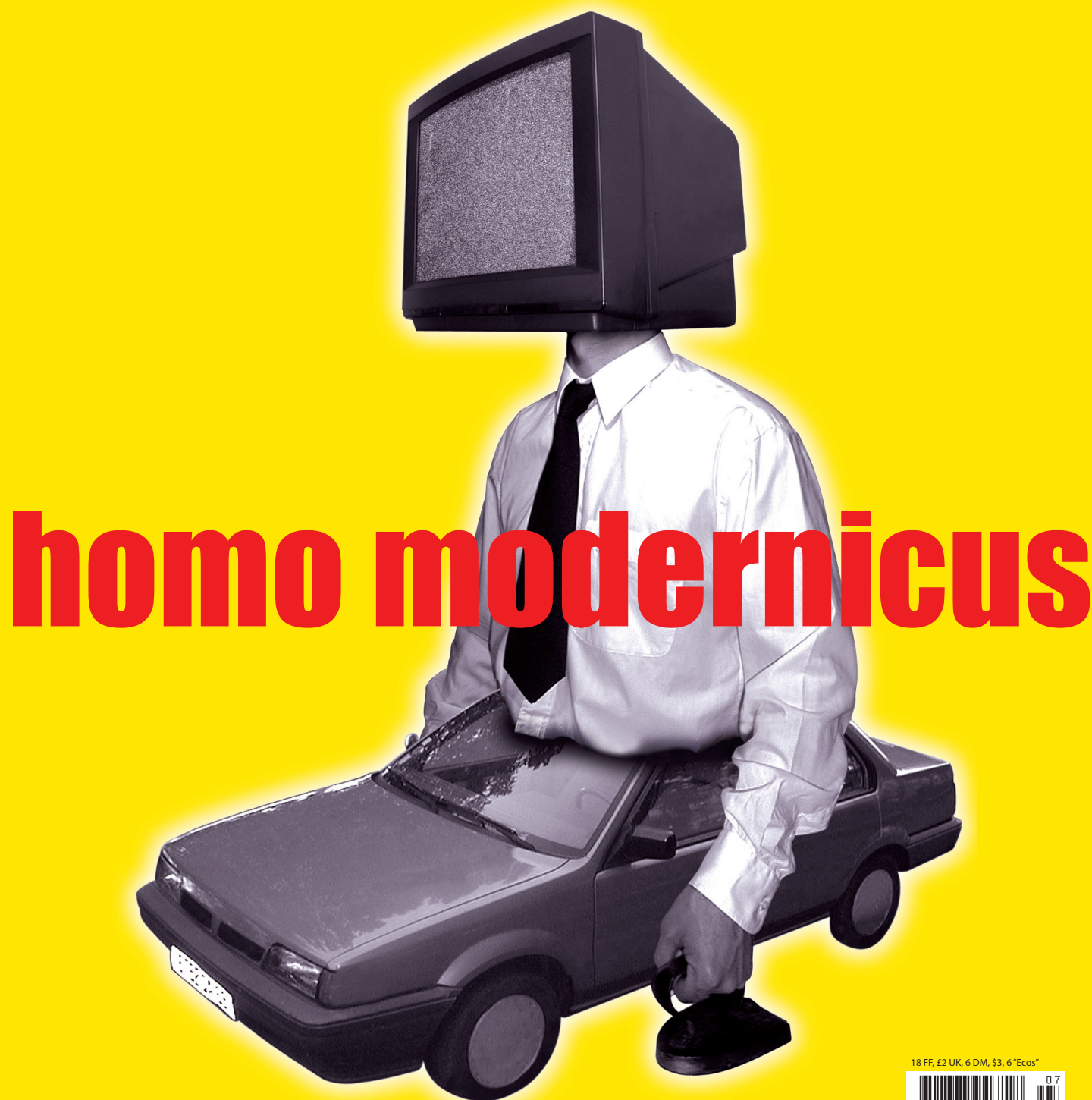
English • Français • Deutsch • Español

CAR Busters

N°7

Winter 2000

For a world without cars
Pour un monde sans voitures



homo modernicus

18 FF, £2 UK, 6 DM, \$3, 6 "Ecos"



CAR Busters



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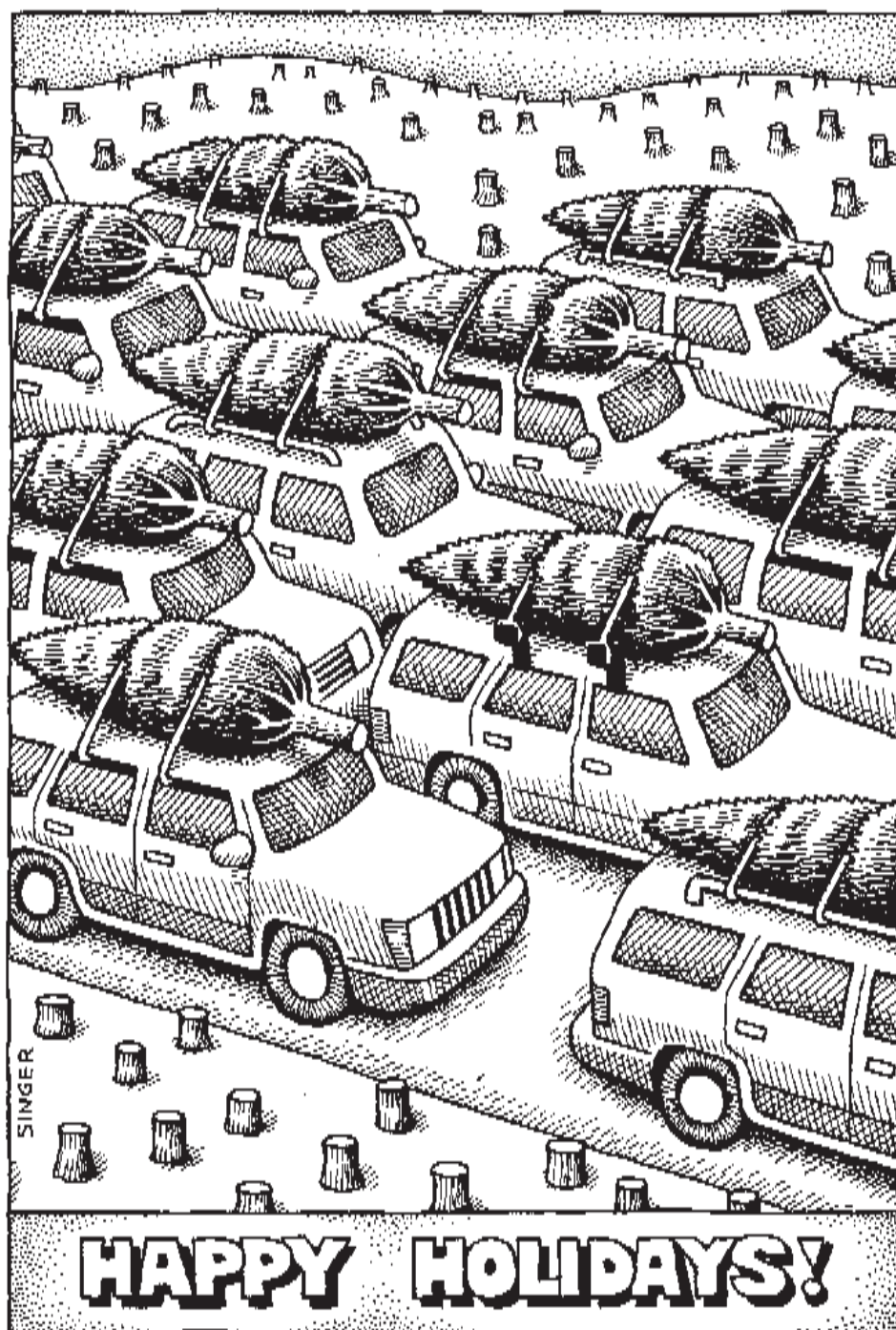
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Mission:

Car Busters aims to build and maintain the international car-free movement. The magazine is published quarterly to facilitate exchange and cooperation among activists and campaigners, reach out to a wider public, inspire new activists and change the world.

Paper:

It's been 100% recycled Cyclus paper from the first issue.

Notice:

Articles in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinion of Car Busters or its editors, however it's pretty bloody likely.

Contribute:

In order to serve the car-free movement well, Car Busters needs a two-way process of communication with the grassroots. We always need news, photos, articles, help with distribution... Especially more subscriptions. Get in touch!



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Feeling alone with your opinion? Tired of reading things written by other people? Send a letter under 300 words to Car Busters, and we just might inflict it on all our readers.

"Eco System" Praised

[...] Bravo! There is one more thing that really surprised me: the price of your magazine which is affordable for most people living in East Europe. Wow, you are among only few magazines who give opportunity to us, in East Europe, to get some valuable information on this base of paying. Ecos are great and make you unique. The world would be quite different if everybody else (including bloody capitalists) did the same. I am afraid I can only dream about it.

Ivica Erdelja
Varazdin, Croatia

The RTS Debate, Part II

Unlike Art Hobson [letter, issue #6], I was actually there in London on June 18. However, I understand his concerns. I've been to just about every RTS event in London since they started, but I won't be going to any more. That RTS "organised" a "Critical Mass-style" ride to disrupt traffic in the City demonstrates that they have failed to understand Critical Mass. No one else could be blamed for misunderstanding it either.

The RTS leadership are not pro-bike or anti-car, so it comes as no surprise that they think of bicycles only as things that get in the way of cars. But I thought the idea that Critical Mass could be ordered to a particular destination for a particular purpose was only held by the cops.

According to the RTS response to Art, the automobile is not one of the Earth's most serious threats. So cars would be okay as long as capitalist social relations are eliminated, then? Car culture is not exclusive to capitalism. It could exist under any ideology—two European nationalist dictatorships have placed the car at the centre of their belief system, for example.

As for the violence on June 18, it was entirely predictable given that hundreds of people were led into a side street in order to attack the LIFFE building, and inevitably, the people who work there. It was deeply ironic to see middle-class kids attacking working-class people for being "capitalists." The people than run the economy aren't staffing the door, or walking back from lunch—they travel by helicopter.

RTS damaged the anti-car movement that day, because they have abused a name that once belonged to a radical dis-organisation. Instead it's a university historical re-enactment society, whose favourite piece is called "Paris 1968."

Daniel James
London, England

[A London RTS activist replies: Daniel's talk of "leadership" and "ordering" seems designed to provoke. I only know of a changing group of people in London who attend the open meetings and who discuss, reach decisions and organise.

On J18 hundreds of cyclists did what Critical Massers have always done: turn up to the monthly ride and hand out leaflets suggesting routes and events. Moreover, most people in RTS—including J18 organisers—are very much "pro-bike," and see cars as (among other concerns) things that get in the way of bikes.

Perhaps cars and roads "could exist under any ideology" but it is hardly incidental that private car use and the associated problems have exploded in market economies based on competition, growth, individual gain and private ownership. I think some type of "car," used by the disabled and the elderly for example, might be okay in a future society—in a simplistic "anti-car" stance this presumably isn't even up for discussion.

The description of the LIFFE (futures exchange) incident meanwhile isn't one I recognise. I remember thousands of people enjoying the street party blockading the LIFFE building when a section of the crowd attempted to break in and occupy it. They met with resistance from security, traders and eventually the "working class" police (who had already attacked the "middle class kids" in another part of The City).

I agree though that the violence on J18 was predictable, but for a different reason. People fighting exploitation and domination have always found that the ruling elite will use violence to maintain their power. If our "protests" become too effective, the professional violence of the state is unleashed.

From its earliest events London RTS talked of understanding the dominance of the car in the context of wider issues: how cities are planned, work divided, and who decides these things. It suggested direct action was about self-organisation of our lives and communities, not just a tactic to get attention for a single issue. The international actions on J18 and since, which bring different struggles together and highlight their common roots, are the fruit of such understanding, whether or not Daniel likes the taste.]

Working for Skoda

After eight months of being unemployed, I found some work as office assistant/marketing worker for Skoda, the car manufacturer owned by Volkswagen. I was told that "know-how seminars" and "car culture educational courses" are planned for me. Fun fun!

I very much need money now, so I must take this job, because there is nothing else. But I think I will get to know the car industry from the inside. It is really big business here. I can contribute something on this for the next Car Busters. Thanks for great inspiration from your work.

Anonymous
Prague, Czech Republic

Activist Cured of Good-Road/Bad-Road Syndrome

Greetings! I came across your insert in an old (June) issue of the Earth First! Journal and became so absorbed in it that I had to write and say hello.

I'm currently acting as adviser to my father on strategy to stop a proposed toll road in Southern California. The campaign has been really moderate—partially because it's in Southern California and any rhetoric that is not economically masturbatory in its celebration of rugged individualism, growth and expansion, and cars-cars-cars is immediately labelled "socialistic."

Although there are some wonderful people working on the campaign, I had not stopped to wonder if our focus on sensitive wetlands habitat—replete with six endangered, though non-fuzzy, species—was incorrect and short-sighted.

The campaign had supported the building of a different road that might "alleviate" the need for the toll road, and the breathless excitement that this "different" road had on people made me ill. But it wasn't until I read your little "Save this Patch of Dirt Beside a Pig Farm" article in the insert that it really all was articulated in my head. Thank you for a well-needed wake-up call for jumpstarting some new fire in this campaign for me.

Schlegel, Santa Cruz Earth First!
Santa Cruz, California, USA

Editors' Note

Re: History of the Car

After going to press, we became aware of a significant problem posed by our extract of Wolfgang Sachs' For Love of the Automobile (issue #6). We had intended to feature a cultural history of the car from its invention through the 1920s. But in so doing the article's ending may have read like a conclusion, giving readers the impression that wealthy women's society was solely responsible for today's "auto-centric" world.

The section read like the story of Adam and Eve: man is seduced by woman's consumerism, and goes out and buys a car, having had little or no desire to do so beforehand.

Of course, wealthy women's society didn't just develop consumeristic values and expensive taste spontaneously all by itself, but in part because the larger male-dominated society forbid such women from doing much else with their time but consume the fruits of their husbands' labour. And as the article's opening pointed out, rich men (without the influence of their wives) bought cars to assert domination over others.

We apologise for a misleading and partial treatment of the subject, even though, surprisingly, the article illicit no letters of complaint.

The Car Busters Collective

"Of course, no vehicle can promise invincibility, but when you're behind the wheel of a Yukon, you feel like you have the power and the strength to do just about anything you want to do. And you'll do it all in great comfort."

- Yukon 4x4 advert, General Motors web site



CAR CULT REVIEW

The Great "Gas Out"

Here's a piece of weirdness that some nutbar is sending around the Internet:

"It's time we did something about the price of gasoline in America! We are all sick and tired of high prices when there are literally millions of gallons in storage. Know what I found out? If there was just one day when no one purchased any gasoline, prices would drop drastically. The so-called oil cartel has decided to slow productivity by some two million barrels per day to drive up the price. I have decided to see how many Americans we can get to not buy any gasoline on one particular day! Let's have a gas out! All we need is a few million to participate in order to make a difference..." n

Car As Instrument of Revolution

"The motor vehicle, that fun-filled, purring, and devilishly fast factory on wheels, has changed our entire public and social life in a few short decades; it has made people more mobile, distances shorter, usable land more extensive, besides having wrought a powerful transformation on the technical organisation of work methods...The revolutionary automobile will serve the cause of the revolutionary working class." n

- Metallarbeiter #10, 1930

(Metal Worker Magazine, Germany)



The Hyped-Up Explosion-Proof Kadhafi-Mobile

Colonel Kadhafi has become a designer. It's he alone who could have inspired the "Jamahiriya Libyan Rocket," name of the first Libyan car whose prototype was unveiled September 6.

According to a spokesperson at the company planning to mass produce the car in 2002, the idea is to make "the safest car on Earth."

In the programme: a bumper capable of sustaining a one-tonne impact, and an airbag built to protect the passengers from all collisions, no matter where the point of impact. Problem: the much-touted airbag will have difficulties absorbing all impacts without suffocating the occupants of the "rocket."

Finally, the Kadhafi prototype has airless tyres to avoid explosions, though every car in the world abandoned this system 70 years ago due to the unmanageable road handling that comes with it.

But the car passed all the tests with success. Tests conceived for nothing but this car itself?

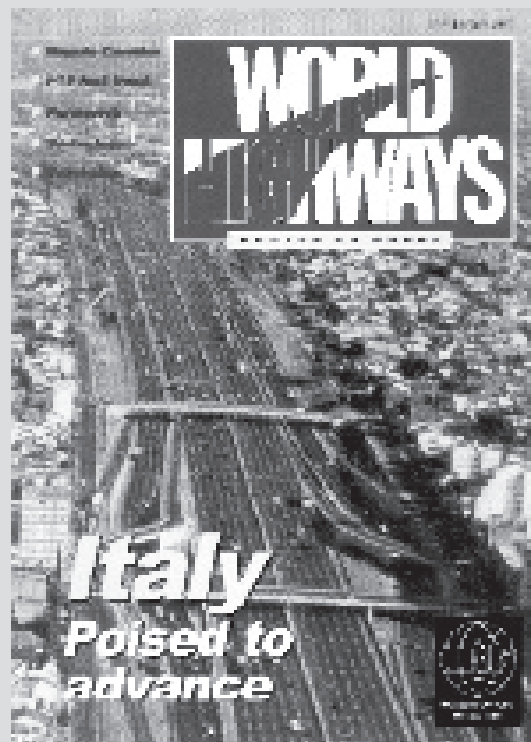
- Libération

With Opel, Discover the Third Millenium

"What form will the world of tomorrow take?" asks car manufacturer Opel in the dawning days of the millenium: "Everyone has already asked themselves this question. The future excites curiosity, provokes inquiry. But today Opel gives you answers!"

With its Millennium Express train tour of Europe, Opel allows us to "jump onboard the future" (having already decided for us what the future will hold) and "travel interactively across the third millenium."

One naïvely wonders (momentarily at least) whether Opel's version of the third millenium will be car-free, and why they chose to do the tour by train. Will Opel start building trains? Will someone please tell us? n



Read World Highways Magazine

Here at Car Busters, World Highways stands among our favourite reading materials. On top of the juicy accounts of international road contracts and the exploits of the latest asphalt sealer, there's Contra Flow, the column of editor Alan Peterson. The page looks like something right out of the Pentagon, with Peterson's suit-and-tie mugshot as the primary graphic. We excerpt from his July/August column:

"Rather than hitting your head against the proverbial brick wall, this sense of frustration is felt by many in the European road industry over blatant bias by govern-ments and the European Commission..."

"Maybe it is time for the various European road groupings to offer a more coordinated response to counter some of the more out-landish propaganda?"

"In Europe, the congestion and resulting anger felt by car and truck users is being hijacked by the rail lobbyists and the 'greens' to suggest that public transport will offer all the solutions...The public has this sense of unease that every time they drive a car they are the sole culprits of the 'greenhouse effect.'

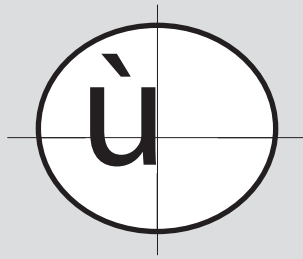
"Roads are not an 'enemy' to humanity so often portrayed by its critics. Getting that message across is going to be a long hard slog. Perhaps the industry could learn from the tactics of Friends of the Earth, although I'm not suggesting our leaders should take to the streets waving placards just yet!"

"Newspapers and TV are the main conduit to the grass roots. We should redouble efforts for cultivating those opinion formers as well as politicians..."

"America's prosperity was built on roads. Lack of them suggests the opposite—economic decline."

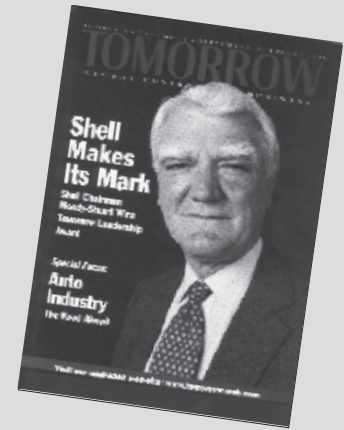
Go Alan! You're brilliant! n





Industry Watch

Digging the dirt on your favourite corporations.



News From

~~Let us take~~ this opportunity to recognise the entry of “greenwash” into the official lexicon of the English language. The Tenth Edition of the Concise Oxford English Dictionary defines greenwash as:

“(n) **disinformation** disseminated by an organisation so as to present an environmentally responsible public image. Derivatives: greenwashing (n). Origin: from green on the pattern of whitewash.”

BP’s “Plug in the Sun”

The competition was intense for this summer’s special Greenhouse Greenwash Award. Transnational Resource and Action Centre’s Greenwash Committee received nominations for five of the largest corporate climate culprits on earth:

- Chevron, for its “People Do” advertising campaign.
- Exxon, for its “Save the Tiger Fund,” which associates its logo with the endangered tiger.
- Mobil, for its unctuous weekly op-ed page ads in the New York Times.
- Shell, for its “Profits or Principles” philosophy that indicates that it does not need to choose between profits and principles but can satisfy everyone.

But BP Amoco, the company made up of British Petroleum and Amoco combined, one-upped its fellow oil giants to grab the summer award for Greenhouse Greenwash.

BP’s “Plug in the Sun” program follows the model of the vertically integrated oil company—creating a market for its own solar panels after buying the world’s largest solar company, Solarex,

on March 7.

“We can fill you up by sunshine,” says BP. But they are still filling you up with petrol. BP Amoco hopes you will feel you are putting “some sun in your life,” even as you put greenhouse gases in your tank.

A week before buying Solarex, BP Amoco showed its true colors (closer to black than green) when it bought ARCO for \$26.5 billion and became the third largest company in the world. Oil production and marketing of fossil fuels remain at the heart of BP Amoco; everything else is window dressing.

For a giant like BP, being the world’s largest solar company is not a difficult accomplishment. ARCO’s \$26.5 billion price tag was 588 times more than what BP spent on Solarex. Even with the planned ten-fold increase in expenditures on renewable energy, those will amount to less than two percent of expenditures on oil.

– Kenny Bruno

If you ever swallow something poisonous and need to vomit, don’t reach for the medicine cabinet, reach for Tomorrow magazine.

It’s the magazine of “Global Environment Business,” but more accurately the magazine of greenwash. Tomorrow applies the word environmental to any negligible reform of all that’s inherently destructive—genetic engineering, industrial plantation forestry, even war: “The U.S. Army is to use tungsten instead of lead in its bullets to limit metal leaching at practice ranges.”

One gets the impression that economic progress, as long as it’s tinkered with a bit along the way, is actually good for the planet. Never mind that global business is growing and consuming more and more, as long as it’s doing it more efficiently you will find it praised in Tomorrow.

There would be no need here to talk about such a silly magazine if not for prominent environmentalists’ collaboration. Jim Motavalli, editor of high-circulation E Magazine, co-wrote the “Auto Industry: The Road Ahead” section of the current issue; Ernst von Weizsäcker, president and founder of the Wuppertal Institute, sits on the editorial advisory board.

The current issue heaps (largely undeserved) praise on Ford’s CEO William Clay Ford Jr. and Shell’s chairman Mark Moody-Stuart, who this year won the Tomorrow Environmental Leadership Award.

Why? Because Shell underwent a “transformation” after top management was convinced that we live in a “show-me” world, in which consumers are less trusting and want not just information, but proof of the company’s social and environmental policies. äää

Here “proof” seems to refer to

misleading information that Shell bets the public will be unable to verify (example: see "A Tale of Two Hospitals" in this issue).

So now Moody-Stuart does an interview with Tomorrow (no doubt after a long briefing session with PR giant Burson Marsteller), admits that "Shell's conversion to the sustain-able development creed was a commercial decision," shakes hands with the editor, and still receives a golden-framed award. It's that easy!

But conditions on the ground remain the same:

"Shell has promised us several things, but has not done any," said Louis Nwanchukwu of Umusia, Nigeria, on November 22. "Two major spills have occurred between 1991 and 1999 and Shell refuses to clean spills from our lands and rivers and pay compensation to us."

The Concerned Citizens of Norco, Louisiana (USA), found that Shell's refinery there emits over two million pounds of toxic chemicals into the air each year. Says Norco resident Margie Richard, "We're living in hell. That's Shell. Take off the 's' and you've got Hell." n - RG



Bethbuster on the

From Swiss grapes to Serbian trains, Bethan Stagg runs away from Car Busters yet again.

Autumn found Beth on the Road in a penniless state, which meant a quick jump out of life with environmentalists and into the "real world." In this case, grape picking in Switzerland.

Real people talk about real things. The outrageous price of car tax, favourite car models, the quirks of their own cars, the worst traffic jams, some of the dangerous junctions (but not of course the cars that make the junction dangerous), some of the dangerous people on the road...

I exaggerate; conversation occasionally included wine and sore backs, but I was surprised (and bored) by how much car topics were turned over. These seasonal grape pickers felt trapped by the drain of money of the car but could not imagine the alternative (not owning one).

All felt complete detachment from the topics I wheeled out (you've guessed it, "c" for climate change, "p" for pollution, the list goes on).

I waved a relieved goodbye to grapes and pickers two weeks later, with a fistful of bank notes to return to the road. My wanderings around France in the weeks that followed found me herding a modest, but highly anarchic flock of sheep, poking spirited pigs into a pen, scraping chicken shit, and other rural sports.

The more time I spend in rural France however the more I realise how hard life in the country today is without a car. When even the local shop is several kilometres in the mud, when buses come once a week, when things need transporting around (such as the family goat who comes on heat and wants a buck fast) you will find your eco-transport ideals well challenged.

I scraped the mud off my boots for a visit back to Bulgaria in the middle of this, for an European Youth for Action activist meeting. Back to post-communist trains, this time through Serbia. As I slumbered

peacefully on the Vienna-Belgrade train, I was awoken by the guard: end of the line. I tumbled out of the train into the city of Novi Sad. Sad for me, even sadder for this war-wrecked country: the bridge connecting Novi Sad to Belgrade no longer existed. For some reason this did not stop the Vienna Express posting "Belgrade" on their departures board and on even the train itself from setting off for its unreachable destination.

Approaching Belgrade in a taxi, I saw more evidence of the war. The Chinese Embassy and the National TV tower were blackened skeletons of twisted metal with faceless shattered windows.

Now I have returned to that country of contradictions, little rainy England. Contradictions because the media are puzzling me at the moment. One paper told

me a few days ago that Britain was finally tackling its pollution problems (less road building, increased petrol prices). Two days later, while trying to hitchhike out of Cornwall, a right-wing paper told me that the government had finally realised: the only way to tackle the "car problem" was to reduce car emissions, not to attack car ownership. In fact, car ownership should be made more available to under-privileged classes and there was lots of room for healthy car increase in the U.K.!

It seems the British government, like the grape pickers, want to believe that if only we could get rid of dangerous intersections, noxious emissions and maybe make the car more affordable... well we wouldn't have to bother with changing the status quo. n



Shell Chairman Mark Moody-Stuart, genetically modified, environmentally improved.



A Tale of Two Hospitals

John Vidal

The Niger Delta faces a new crisis as violence flares and resentment builds up against Shell and other Western oil companies, which extract oil worth an estimated £94 billion a year from below the villages of some of the world's poorest people. Hardly surprising when you see Shell company policy on the ground.

Take two hospitals. The first, at Gokana in Ogoniland, part of Nigeria's oil-rich Niger Delta, serves at least 200,000 people. In the past 25 years it has been allowed to fall apart. There are birds' nests in the corridors and green mould grows on the walls. The men's wards have no windows; the kitchen is a one-ring stove and a blackened pot.

Gokana hospital has fewer drugs than most people in Britain keep in their bathrooms. It has no electricity and no running or hot water. The beds have no mattresses, there are holes in the roof, the medical records are kept on the floor. Ants crawl everywhere and snakes are often found in the wards.

There is no laboratory or diagnostic equipment and operations take place on a Wednesday if the patient can afford the diesel to get an old generator going. There are no anaesthetics, x-ray machines or incubators. A new sterilising machine lies unopened at the entrance but there is no money to pay people to install it, no electricity to power it and no one knows how to use it.

Gokana hospital is part of Shell's 1996 "Ogoni Reconciliation" plan, drawn up after the execution of the author and Ogoni activist Ken Saro-Wiwa to combat international concern at the oil company's environmental and human rights record in the area. It is, the company says, a symbol of its commitment to the social and economic well-being of local communities.

P.R. Versus Reality

Shell trumpets that it has built the hospital, a water tower, drilled a borehole, taken over responsibility for supplying drugs, and donated an ambulance, and is now topping up the pay of the hospital staff. But the reality is different. The new water tower looks good, but it doesn't work and there is no money to run the generator on which it depends. Besides, say the hospital staff, it would have been far cheaper to restore the old tank, which would have benefited hundreds of people in the nearby village. No one, they say, was consulted and no Shell representative has, to anyone's knowledge, been to Gokana.

The donated ambulance is an old pick-up truck. The drugs Shell supplies cost more than they would on the open market, the doctor says. He has not been paid for five months. Nor have the nurses, who have no living quarters and must commute up to 30 miles a day. But Gokana, said a man awaiting surgery for a hernia, is the "best hospital in the region."

Gleaming Clinic

Contrast the Shell hospital for its 4,500 workers 25 miles away in the company compound in Port Harcourt. Shell has spent, at a conservative estimate, £15.6 million rebuilding and equipping it in the past year. The hospital employs 75 people, including seven doctors, anaesthetists, pharmacists and surgeons.

Its drug budget is nearly US\$500,000 a year; there are resuscitation and incubation units and air-conditioned maternity, casualty, emergency and isolation wards. The 40 beds have crisp cotton sheets bearing the Shell logo. There is no illness, says the matron, that the clinic cannot handle. The hospital has four new ambulances and access to helicopters.

Consultants from London can be flown in, or patients flown to Europe in one of Shell's new company jets. On the day we visited, seven people were preparing food for 25 in-patients. It is, agrees the matron, who worked for years in the British health service, one of the best hospitals of its kind in the world.

"This is another country, a country within a country," said Bobo Brown, Shell's public relations chief in Port

Harcourt, as he pointed out the schools, gyms, houses, factories, office blocks and playing fields in the Shell compound.

Paternalistic Spending

Shell was stepping up its contributions to communities in the region, from US\$32 million in 1998 to US\$40 million in 1999, and earmarking more for 2000. But it was precisely because it was investing in the communities that so many people were agitating.

How the money is being spent is a cause of deep resentment. Villagers accuse Shell of being parsimonious at best, incompetent at development work, neglecting consultation, and paternalistic. In Ogoniland the ten other health, environment, education and farming projects supported by the company are dismissed by Ledum Mitee, acting president of Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People, as "ineffective, unnecessary or just P.R. for the company."

"They include re-roofing health centres which do not need new roofs and education awards that are disputable," he said.

"There have been protests about some of the roads that Shell says it is building. No one knows anything about help with fertilisers or scholarships and no work has been done cleaning up the oil spills. They decide what is good for us. They are just wasting resources. We have yet to see the impact of all this spending."

"Perhaps the money is spent," said an E.U.-funded Westerner working with a Nigerian NGO in Port Harcourt. "Where does it go? It never reaches the grassroots. People never see it. The waste of resources is phenomenal. It seems to have resulted in corruption. They have wasted millions of dollars dividing communities by paying some people and turning a blind eye to what is happening around them." n

- from The Guardian, Sept. 15

Killing Spree for Shell

As many as 100 civilians were murdered by soldiers in late November when the Federal Government of President Olusegun Obasanjo deployed a 5,000-strong punitive military mission from the Port Harcourt naval base to the Niger Delta oil-producing state of Bayelsa.

Local communities also reported incidents of rape and the spreading of terror that caused thousands of villagers to flee their homes to escape the wrath of the troops.

The latest round of unrest was supposedly provoked by the alleged kidnapping and killing of 12 policemen in the village of Odi.

President Obasanjo, in a letter leaked to the press, warned the Governor of Bayelsa, Alameisiegha, that action would be taken as he reassured oil executives that the government was "very much aware of the concerns of the oil producing companies for law and order."

The reason for these attacks was clearly spelt out by the Minister of Defence, who said, "This Operation HAKURI II was initiated with the mandate of protecting lives and property, particularly oil platforms, flow stations, operating rig terminals and pipelines, refineries and power installations in the Niger Delta."

Most violence is centred around the village of Odi, where the Ijaw ethnic nationality has been vocal in demand-

ing control of resources and an end to poverty and pollution.

"The situation there is terrible," said Senator Adawari Pepple. "All the buildings have been reduced to rubble...I myself saw three corpses."

"Odi community has been razed to the ground and dozens of people, including women and children, have been killed," Felix Tuodolo, president of the Ijaw Youths Council grouping told Reuters in Port Harcourt.

As of December 3, reports state that buildings at the outer fringes of Odi were still being razed by armed personnel. Odi has three capped oil wells owned by Shell. The Warri communities being currently ransacked all have Shell's oil wells.

"The oil multinational companies have repeatedly said that they do not work behind military shields. Now, who are the military intimidating and killing the local people for?" said Nnimmo Bassey of Environmental Rights Action. n

- Kenny Bruno

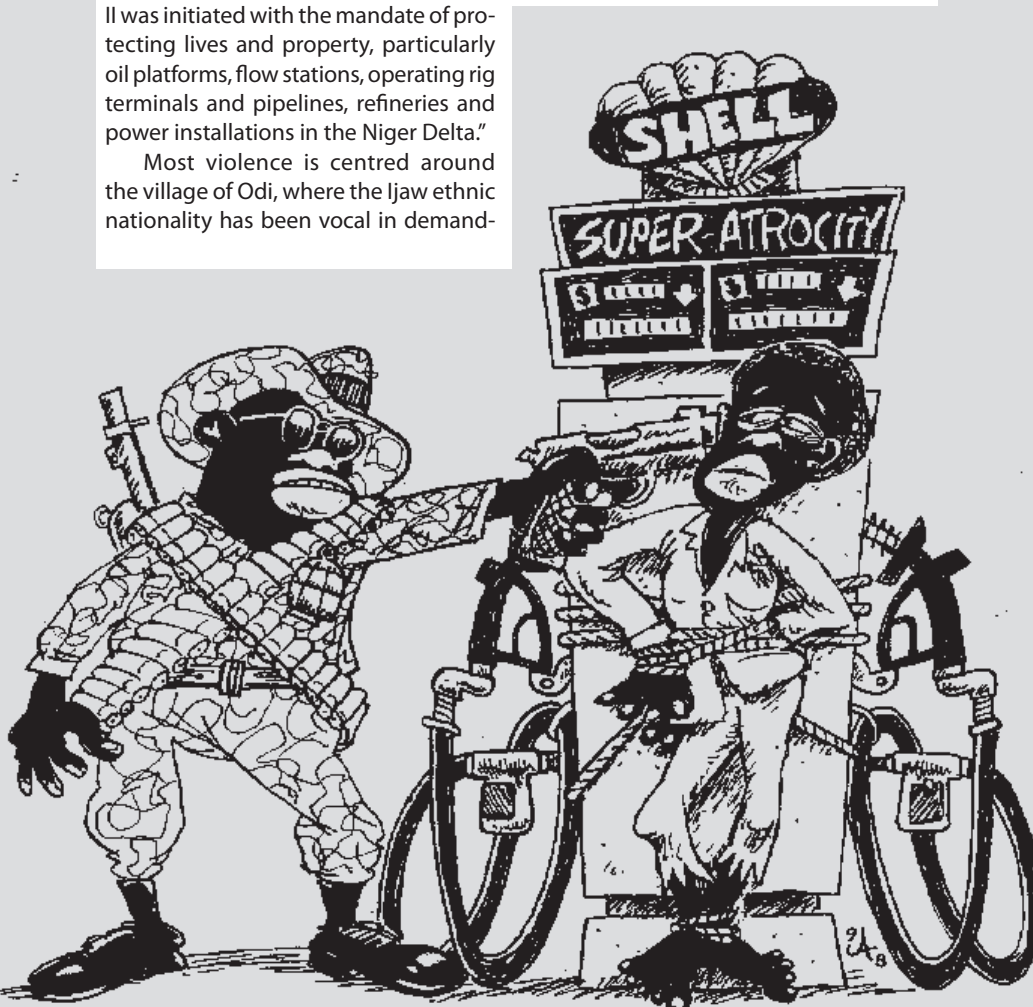
Wiwa Trial

On the fourth anniversary of the murder of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni leaders, Environmental Rights Action/Friends of the Earth Nigeria called November 9 for the trial of all those linked with the death of the Ogoni Nine, as well as a public apology from the government and Shell Nigeria to the Ogoni people for the pain suffered by them and their land.

The group specifically demanded a court trial for members of the "kangaroo tribunal" who passed the death sentence on the basis of false evidence, the military parliament that approved the verdict without even seeing the judgement, the Rivers State Internal Security Force that sowed war and agony in Ogoni and the Rivers State and central governments that pronounced the Ogoni Nine guilty even before charging them.

"We are not part of those who think that we should forget our recent past," remarked Nnimmo Bassey, ERA Director. "We insist that those who raped the land and its people, maimed and murdered their fellow citizens should have their day in court, however long it may be."

ERA also demanded that the compensation for the families of the dead, recommended by a United Nations fact-finding team, be paid without further delay. n

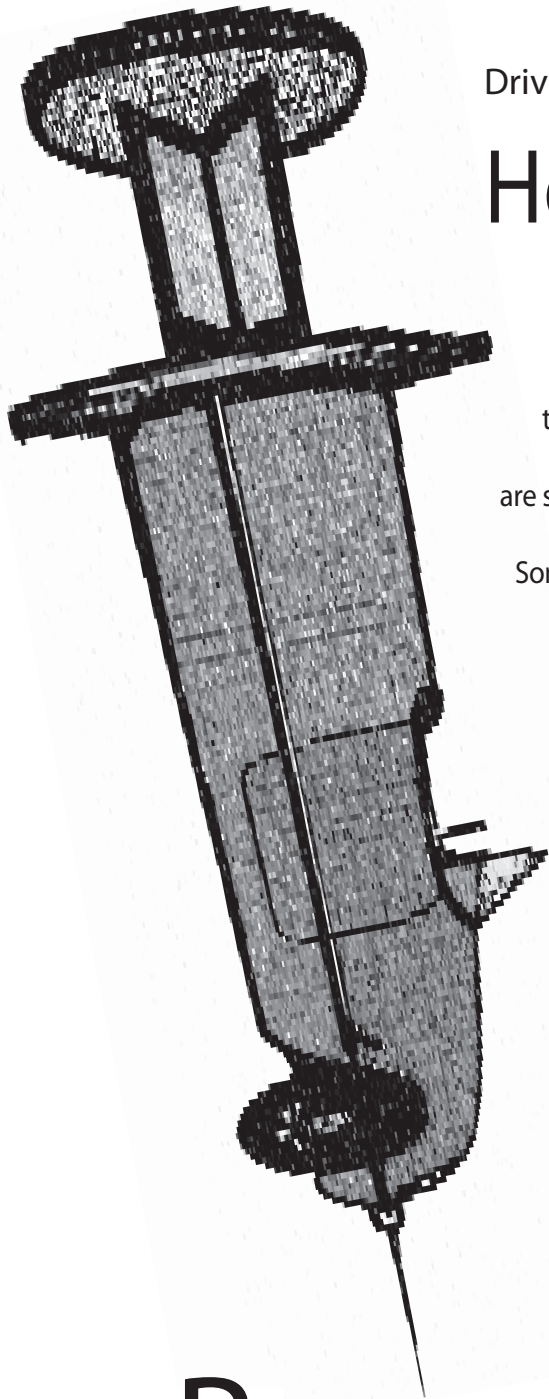


A recent Shell ad in Business Week, replete with exuberant green foliage behind the company logo, claims Shell is "focusing [its] energies on developing [renewable energy] solutions." Meanwhile, its Annual Report documents fossil fuel growth and the astounding global reach of its oil and gas exploration and production operations. n

Driving as addiction

Hooked on Cars

Sina Arnold and Domenica Settle



New bike lanes. Free local buses. High petrol prices. Special train offers. Car-free zones. Some places have tried everything to make car use as unpleasant as possible while at the same time providing alternatives that are easily accessible. Yet drivers are still out there, putting themselves into traffic jams, honking, shouting, cursing their metal boxes and fellow drivers. Why? Some researchers suggest that no stick-and-carrot tactics will bring about big changes for one simple reason: car drivers are addicts.

them every time they drive, every time they are in control of a large technical machine like a car. The car thus takes on a different meaning, no longer just a means of travel, but a surrogate satisfaction. Humans try to find a fulfilled moment in their stressful, unsatisfying lives, and at the same time become even more a victim to a speed rush.

Habit or Addiction, No Matter

At the very least, car use is habitual. Car trips are usually made without thought to the existence of an alternative. Every day car users may not be in it for the pleasure. Most likely there won't be a lot of enjoyment involved at all.

Nevertheless, they act like heroin junkies—possibly willing to quit, but too hooked on their cars to be able to. Spörli points out that for this very reason, rational, convincing arguments won't work to keep people from driving their cars.

Researchers in the Netherlands found that while factual information concerning environmental effects helped raise individuals' awareness of the need for environmental policy, the information did not lead to a change in the respondents' behaviour. To try and persuade people that it is important for them to change their behaviour, information usually conveys the urgency of the situation. The campaign publicity may be shocking, full of dire warnings of the consequences if people don't do something. Yet this again can also be counterproductive, since typical responses to doom and gloom information is to feel completely overwhelmed, causing feelings of helplessness and despair among the target audience. It sure is difficult to get people to contemplate change by attacking the very behaviour they rely on, and, in some respects at least, derive benefits from.

So what tactics should be used? Instead of preaching about the horrible consequences of car use and constantly pointing our fingers at those nasty car drivers, should we treat them with pity and patience, as victims to our speedy society and its surrogate satisfactions? If we acknowledge that at least for some people car driving can be an addiction, and a habit for many more, then without a doubt we have to radically alter our strategies—stop merely providing alternatives and start helping people kick the habit.

Step by Step

How do you cure an addiction?

Over the last 20 years, several countries have shifted from cigarette smoking being accepted as the norm to smoking being a frowned-upon habit of a minority. The anti-smoking campaigns from these countries perhaps contain some lessons for the car-free movement.

And over the years, extensive studies have

established what brings about behavioural change. An early concept was the Knowledge-Attitude-Behaviour model, which assumed that knowledge (smoking/driving damages your health, that of others and the environment) affects attitudes (believing smoking/driving is a bad thing to do) and then behaviour (give up smoking/driving).

Repeated usage. Loss of control over how often the rug is taken. Usage despite full knowledge of the risks. Psychological dependence. Just who are we describing?

According to a 1995 British study carried out by the RAC Foundation for Motoring and Environment, a substantial majority of car owners—some 80 percent—report that they would find it difficult if not impossible to abandon car use. When asked whether they would reduce car travel if circumstances and commitments allowed, 50 percent answered “not really” or “certainly not.”

Car As Drug

According to Swiss author Siro Spörli, the automobile is as dangerous as a drug. Humans experience a rush of power and lust flowing through

Yet behavioural psychology has exposed this model's inadequacy. Most smokers believe smoking is bad for you and want to give up, yet still continue smoking.

Theories of behavioural change now assert that in making fundamental alterations in personal behaviour, the individual passes through various stages: Before starting to quit, an addict must acknowledge that the behaviour is a problem. Step two is move from recognising the problem to deciding to do something about it. It is only then that behavioural change really starts, and the addict must still pass through the final stage, of sticking to the new habits.

Providing people with cycle paths assumes they are already at step two, and doesn't necessarily provide the social support needed to get through the final step. To achieve maximum behavioural change, campaigns should guide people from stage to stage, rather than presenting the end-state as achievable in one go.

Too Late for Children?

An important feature of anti-smoking campaigns has been the focus on children. Although there are various approaches to dealing with habits, most experts agree that the best solution is to never pick them up. It follows then that the best way of dealing with unnecessary car use is never to start it in the first place.

A 1995 British study found that children are as dependent on cars as their parents, with 90 percent of girls and 75 percent of boys saying that they would find it difficult to adjust their lifestyles without a car. If attempts are to be made to prevent future generations from becoming addicted to the car, it is important to target children who have yet to assimilate the pro-car propaganda.

The study suggests that by the time children reach age 13 it is too late, the children having been already absorbed into the car culture through social conditioning.

Ranging from soft toy cars for babies to plastic electric police cars, society teaches children about the important role a car must play in one's life. Add to that parents who themselves can hardly "just say no" and insist the only safe way to get to school is by car, plus

the constant advertising by the car industry, and the creation of yet another car addict is not that surprising.

Take 'Em By the Hand

Another tactic in the health promoter's dossier of addiction-fighting tips is emphasising the positive. Rather than saying "don't drink alcohol" to a population that is dependent on it, the message can be "have at least three alcohol-free days a week." This is a message that people are much more receptive to, instead of immediately switching off. In the case of "cars versus bicycles," the health promotion experience would suggest an approach that says that there can be room for both: "Cars will inevitably continue to be a significant transport mode, but for

some short trips, why not try a bike some time?" could be the kind of message being delivered.

But is "drive less" a compromise implying the driving on long trips is okay? According to health promoters, it's a viable way of fighting addiction.

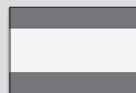
Examples of the positive approach might be the annual

Car-Free Day in France (see World News section) or the Bike-to-Work Weeks organised in some American cities. It doesn't work to simply offer people transport "alternatives" or "options"; effective campaigns take people by the hand and actively encourage them to break the car habit.

If insights like that continue, will the first "Autoholics Anonymous" groups start sprouting up? Will there be psychiatrists and social workers specializing on curing car addicts? Will we have state-sponsored detoxification programs with electric cars as methadone and people publicly declaring to be car-free, destroying their formerly beloved vehicles? Who knows... n

TRANSLATION

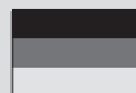
Traduction • Traducción • Übersetzung



Carriles bici, zonas libres de coches, elevados precios del combustible- en algunos sitios las condiciones para una vida libre de coches no podrían ser mejores. Y sin embargo algunos conductores parecen preferir los atascos y el estrés. ¿Porqué?

Algunos autores piensan que conducir es adictivo. El conductor experimenta una sensación de poder y velocidad. El automóvil adquiere unas connotaciones diferentes. Deja de constituir un medio de transporte para convertirse en un sustitutivo placentero en nuestra fría y acelerada sociedad. La droga "coche" desbloquea y por lo tanto abre la puerta a los instintos más atávicos. Como mínimo, el uso del coche se convierte en un hábito - el coche se usa sin considerar otras alternativas, cualquier argumento racional es inútil.

Teorías inusuales y controvertidas como esta nos aportan otro punto de vista sobre el tema y nos invitan a prestar más atención a experiencias hasta cierto punto exitosas como las campañas anti-tabaco. Una de las conclusiones es: desengancharse de una droga se debe hacer paso a paso, la persona necesita ser guiada despacio, por su propio camino, en lugar de simplemente señalarle el objetivo final. Como el Día sin coches Europeo por ejemplo. Sin embargo, la mejor prevención contra una droga parece ser no empezar nunca a emplearla. Los estudios demuestran que la mayoría de los niños son tan adictos a los coches como sus padres. Por tanto, el tratamiento de las actitudes de los niños hacia el automóvil requiere de influencias positivas ya desde la infancia. En suma, parece muy importante desarrollar alternativas positivas y una cierta comprensión por la situación de las personas adictas al coche. n



Fahrradspuren, autofreie Strassen, hohe Benzinpreise - an einigen Orten könnten die Voraussetzungen für ein autofreies Leben nicht besser sein. Und doch scheinen einige Autofahrer die Staus und den Stress vorzuziehen. Warum? Einige Autoren

behaupten, dass Autofahren abhängig macht. Der Fahrer wird in einen Macht- und Geschwindigkeitsrausch versetzt, das Auto wird zweckentfremdet, es dient weniger als Fortbewegungsmittel denn als Ersatzbefriedigung in unserer kalten, schnelllebigen Gesellschaft. Die Droge "Auto" wirkt enthemmend und öffnet die Pforten für das Versinken in die primitivsten Instinkte. Und wenn schon keine Abhängigkeit, so wird doch zumindest eine Gewohnheit verursacht - ohne Gedanken an Alternativen wird ins Auto gestiegen, und rationale Argumente scheinen unwirksam zu werden.

Ungewöhnliche und umstrittene Theorien wie diese lassen uns das Thema von einer anderen Seite angehen und das Augenmerk auf die zum Teil sehr erfolgreichen Anti-Rauch-Kampagnen wenden. Diese brachten unter anderem folgende Ergebnisse hervor: eine Loslösung sollte Schritt für Schritt stattfinden, die Betroffenen langsam auf ihrem Weg geführt werden, anstatt nur das Endziel aufzuführen. Veranstaltungen wie Autofreie Sonntage können dazu beitragen. Die beste Prevention gegen eine mögliche Droge ist, gar nicht erst mit ihr anzufangen. Studien ergaben, dass viele Kinder bereits genauso auf das Auto fixiert sind wie ihre Eltern. In der Kindheit muss von daher begonnen werden, die spätere Einstellung zum Auto positiv zu beeinflussen. Wichtig scheint vor allem eine bejahende Herangehensweise, das Aufzeigen von Alternativen und ein gewisses Verständnis für die Situation des Betroffenen. n



CONTROVERSY

in the movement



Seeing a general lack of debate among car-free activists, Car Busters has collected four controversial opinions to stir up some thought and provoke a bit of discord within the ranks.

Traffic Calming Doesn't Work

We have now arrived at the ultimate destination. Nothing can get in the way of the car because there is nothing there. We have ethnically cleansed our cities of children and the elderly and we have dramatically improved road safety by ridding the streets and roads of things that might get hurt. This is the end of civilised urban living and the replacement of the whole concept of "urbanity" by sterility and mobility.

The car has won its evolutionary race against other species. But if we want to protect a species that is in danger of extinction, we need to create

the kind of habitat that will nurture and protect. We need to repopulate public places with children and the elderly and we need to recover what we have lost in the countryside. We need to get rid of cars.

This is much simpler than is normally thought to be the case. We have tried traffic calming, which is a bit like asking the most blood-thirsty, carnivorous and cannibalistic animal on the block to eat a bit less and eat a bit less noisily. So traffic calming hasn't worked.

The U.K. experience of traffic calming is very disappointing. On residential roads in Liverpool, Manchester, Lancaster and Preston there are still large volumes of traffic on calmed roads. The traffic calming has not reduced traffic. The

traffic that is there is speeding between humps and chicanes creating higher levels of traffic danger. The roads are more congested at peak times as traffic moves slowly through the chicanes and over the humps and pollution is worse. Local residents on Lancaster's traffic calmed streets are very unhappy and want real relief from traffic.

The next stage is to exclude the beasts entirely. We need whole networks of streets in towns and cities and whole networks of roads in tourist areas and country areas that are quite simply car-free. We will ensure that these areas have the best quality walking, cycling and public transport opportunities to be found anywhere in the world. They will have their deliveries of goods and services, they will have emergency services, they can even have resident car access. In tourist areas like the English Lake District this means decommission-

ing about 1,000 km of road. They would simply be taken out of use as general purpose, any-car access roads. In towns and cities residents would have to sort out for themselves whether or not they want a free-for-all for cars. If they decide to exclude cars they can exclude cars. Cars will be excluded by physical barriers. This is traffic calming for real. Vehicles that do enter (e.g. the residents themselves) would lose that privilege if they exceed the 20kph speed limit, drink and drive or show discourtesy to people on foot or bike.

We have a simple choice here. We can dismiss all this talk of car exclusion as utopian nonsense ("he should live in the real world"). This is the normal political response from those who have supervised and funded the end of urbanity in Europe. We can feed the monster even more (more roads, more car parks, more destruction of the countryside) and we can assert the absolute inalienable right of every car driver to go anywhere at any speed for any reason because that is what freedom is all about.

We can kill our children, give them asthma, imprison them in their homes, schools and cars as they move between the two. We can terrorise the elderly and destroy communities and deny bike and pedestrian access to rural roads in Europe's tourist areas.

This is the real world that is actually on offer and it's being paid for out of our taxes and

supported by our politicians. Perhaps it is time to explain loudly and clearly what "real" actually means and put an end to the destruction of space, time, place, people and community.

- John Whitelegg

World Transport Policy & Practice

The Street Party Was Never Just About Cars

The idea of the Reclaim the Streets street party was never just about cars. It was to take over major roads in London and transform them into ephemeral festivals of resistance. The street party itself was a form "reclaimed from the inanities of royal jubilees and state 'celebrations.'" Turning to proactive, instead of defensive, direct action, enabled us to expand our remit into a wider cultural critique. Activist Paul Morrizo from Reclaim the Streets and the M11 campaign clarifies this expansion: "We are basically about taking back public space from the enclosed private arena. At its simplest it is an attack on cars as a principle agent of enclosure. It's about reclaiming the streets as public inclusive space from the private inclusive use of the car. But we believe in this as a broader principle, taking back those things which have been enclosed within capitalist circulation and returning them to collective use as a commons."

This merging of social and ecological principles into a wider cultural critique were to become key in Reclaim the Streets' later alliances with striking public transport and dock workers. For Reclaim the Streets just getting rid of cars from the streets was not enough. Activist Del Bailie explains: "Won't the streets be better without cars? Not if all that replaces them are aisles of pedestrianised consumption or shopping 'villages' safely protected from the elements. To be against the car for its own sake is insane; claiming one piece as the whole jigsaw. The struggle for car-free space must not be separated from the struggle against global capitalism, for in truth the former is encapsulated in the latter. The streets are as full of capitalism as of cars and the pollution of capitalism is much more insidious."

The first stages of uprisings have often been theatrical and carnival-esque, a revelatory and sensuous explosion outside the normal pattern of politics. The street party would become a revolutionary carnival in the spirit of the great moments of revolutionary history. From the Middle Ages onwards, the carnival has offered glimpses of the world turned upside down, a topsy turvy universe

free of toil, suffering and inequality. Carnival celebrates temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and the established order; it marks the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions.

Raoul Vaneigem wrote that "revolutionary moments are carnivals in which the individual life celebrates its unification with a regenerated society." But the street party can be read as a reversal of this assertion; as an attempt to make carnival the revolutionary moment. Placing the 'what could be' in the path of

'what is' and celebrating the 'here and now' in the road of the rush for 'there and later,' it hopes to re-energise the possibility of radical change... It is an expansive desire, for freedom, for creativity, to truly live.

- John Jordan
Reclaim the Streets
London

All We Need Is One Good Scandal

We all know that one good scandal can get more attention than years of campaigning in front of a keyboard and glowing screen, but very few people actually create scandals on purpose. Why is this?

If you do it right, it's a win-win scenario—the media get their sexy news item and you get your issue in the public limelight, at least briefly. That's if you put a lot of creative thought into the action, make it as outrageous as possible and never turn back or go half-way. It's up to the media and the public reaction to decide what brings a shocking action plan to the level of scandal. But above all it depends on how far you take it and how much you are willing to risk.

The Situationist International, a group of avant-garde '60s radicals, first became known to the world when some of its fans gained control of the University of Strasbourg student union. Together they conspired to produce a radical pamphlet "On the Poverty

of Student Life," reproduce it by the thousands with the illegal use of student funds, and pass it out at official university functions. Today, 33 years after their famous trial, the pamphlet has been translated into more than a dozen languages and reprinted in over half a million copies. Some even call the Strasbourg Scandal the precursor to the May 1968 uprisings.

Then there's the fake priest who took to the altar during Easter services to a full house at Notre Dame Cathedral and commenced a sermon proclaiming "God is dead." Or the Black Panthers, organising marches of black youth in uniform and rifles over their shoulders (which was perfectly legal at the time), to stand up for racial equality. Or the Yippies of the late '60s who ran a pig named Pigasus for President of the United States. The list goes on, from the Biotic Baking Brigade's pie-throwing spree to the Sex Pistols, a band that was formed with the sole purpose of upsetting the status quo, and, in the short term anyway, succeeded.

So where's the scandal to make the car-free movement known to the world? Has anyone even thought of it? Just think, at the next big international car show, the entire exposition centre in all its hyped-up glory could end up reeking of diesel fumes. Or filled with an oil slick complete with dead birds recovered for the occasion from a wildlife rehab centre. The more shocking the better. A mysterious organisation, the Pedestrian Liberation Front, could take credit, backed up by a sophisticated untraceable press release campaign and a web site powerfully and succinctly explaining what the movement stands for.

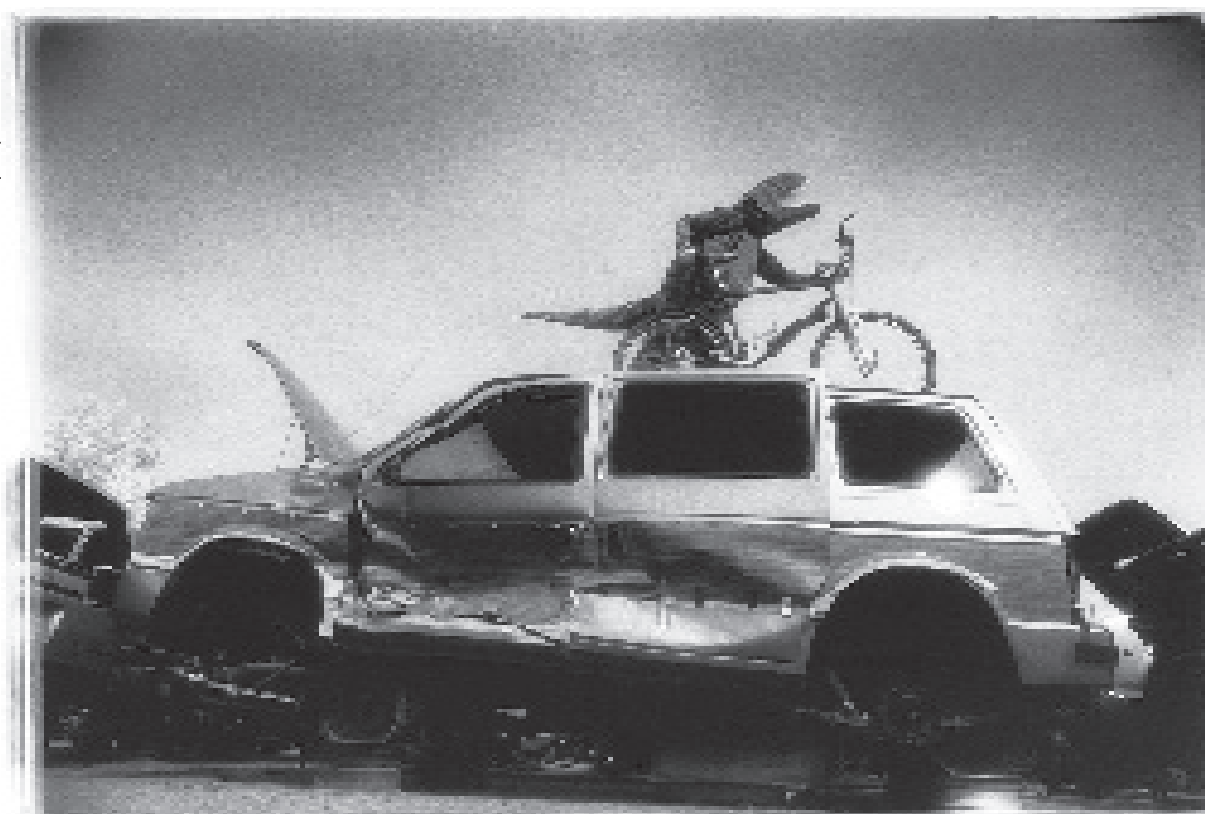
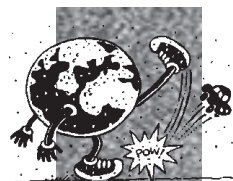
Or the same group, in a city where cars routinely park on and block the sidewalks, could begin with an official-looking sidewalk stenciling campaign "Cars Parked on Sidewalk Will Be Towed Away at Owners' Expense." Two weeks later the PLF tows away several cars to a secret location, announcing, again by untraceable press release, that in order to get their cars returned, owners Joe Ford, Nancy Opel and George Fiat must call up The Daily News and promise never to block pedestrians' paths again.

If you produce a magazine, you could put out an issue with a cover that has nothing whatsoever to do with its contents, and not even offer the usual introduction to explain it. (Hee hee.)

You could even set up a <www.henryford.com> web site, which at first glance appears to be a biography

Just so you know, the newspaper cover (opposite) was put together in Photoshop, and has no connection to any real event. However, the Edinburgh Evening News, unfortunately, is in fact a real newspaper, at least according to most people's definition of "real," which itself is unfortunate.

continued on page 27



T. Raax for Mayor

The Dinosaurs Against Fossil Fuels, Vancouver's legendary band of bike activists dressed up in dinosuits (see Car Busters #3), are ready to take over the city!

They've become a political party, and a certain Mr. T. Raax actually stood as their candidate for mayor in the November 20 Vancouver city elections.

Calling themselves "the only party honest enough to admit it's out of date," the Dinos ran on a platform that pushes for sane transport and the opposition to burning fossil fuels, for example in the engines of cars.

As T. Raax put it: "There are already way too many cars in this city. They're poisoning our air, wrecking our neighbourhoods and giving our citizenry fat butts. This fossil-fuel addiction is killing all of us and that really sucks. Extinction stinks—ask any dinosaur!"

"Fortunately we underestimated how seriously people such as Dr. Evil and T. Raxx take their foolishness," editorialised the Vancouver Sun. "Mock candidates do not really want the job so much as an opportunity to ask impolitic questions or simply say what no one else will, whether it wins them votes or not. There should always be room for that somewhere in the political process."

Where the Dinos are going remains to be seen. At one of their latest meetings they were reported to have been bursting into a spontaneous chant of

"Raax For Premier!"

- Carmen Mills

Counting Russian Peas

Ecopolis, a newly-established environmental group, has been working on developing local transport in the Russian industrial city of Nizhny Novgorod around public electric transport and bike lanes.

In September they organised an event where 150 activists gathered on the main square, held up banners against the domination of cars and passed out information proposing clean air and streets for people, not vehicles.

As Alexandra from Ecopolis describes: "We collected signatures for a bicycle creation network. All pedestrians had the possibility to vote for 'city for people or city for car' by putting a pea into a jar. Most of them wanted a city for people. After this we were invited to the mayor's round table on public transport. We however intend to continue the struggle to change the mentality of automobilists and officials of the city. If you are interested in our ideas, please write us about your ideas and projects. We invite you to co-work with us."

To contact Ecopolis by e-mail: <alex@hydro.appl.sci-nnov.ru>.

Action Days on Aviation and Environment

October 29 and 30 saw the third international Action Days on Aviation and Environment. This year groups in 18 countries took part in the "Right Price for Air Travel" initiative to illustrate the widespread environmental concern about air transport.

About 100 organisations did actions that varied from airport demonstrations to media work. Participating countries included Belgium, Canada, England, France, Germany, Italy, Australia, Portugal, Spain, the Netherlands and Macedonia.

The action days ran parallel to the UNFCCC climate conference, COP5, in Bonn, Germany. No real progress was made on the issue of greenhouse gas emissions caused by air transport during this meeting, which means there are still no binding agreements to reduce these emissions. Air traffic campaigners are eagerly awaiting the upcoming E.U. statement on air transport and the environment that is expected shortly.

- Friends of the Earth

Any Creative Action Ideas To Share With the World?

Why not go out and do the action first, then send in a report?...

Road Building Office Burned to the Ground

In the night of September 26, the 1,000m² office of Tielaitos, the main Finnish road building department, was burned down in the city of Porvoo, about 40km from Helsinki. Nobody got hurt in the fire. Economic damage is estimated at several millions of Finnish Marks. A slogan scrawled on the wall left standing stated: "Evil always gets its cost!"

Works on the E18 motorway from Porvoo to Koskenkyld just began in September. The project manager commented after the fire that "Tielaitos has no part in raping nature, it's the Finnish parliament which should be blamed for any destruction. We only do what we have been asked to do. The motorway is not to be blamed for daily car commuting to Helsinki (180km) and other places; the expensive Helsinki departments are to blame."

About 100 motorway building sites have been attacked in the last two years; nobody has been charged.

"Pipeline Art Gallery"

Fights Caspian Oil Project

Despite stiff opposition from local communities, the Caspian Pipeline Consortium is pushing to construct a 1,500-km pipeline on the Russian coast of the Black Sea.

Since 1996, young activists have been campaigning against the project. Through direct actions and a travelling show called "The Pipeline Art Gallery," they forced the parliament to issue permission to gather signatures for a referendum.

The Art Gallery travelled along the Black Sea coastline exhibiting oilballs, plants, bird skeletons, feathers, seaweed and stones in oil, plus oil concrete with dead fish. During a recent demonstration in front of the city administration building, the militia arrested people, confiscated and broke cameras. The protesters were held for seven hours and their right to call their lawyers was denied.

The Caspian Pipeline Consortium is not only a Russian company, other shareholders include Chevron (USA),

Mobil (USA) and Agip (Italy). None of these companies has been taking into account public opinion, even though they are required to do so by law.

- Project Underground [1916A MLK Jr. Way, Berkeley, CA 94704; tel: +(1) 510-705-8981; fax: +(1) 510-705-8983; web: <www.moles.org>.

In Search of Bike-Friendliness

The Belgian cycling club Fietstersbond organised a 24-hour bike marathon in September to find bike-friendly companies in their area.

Fifty people were on the look-out for firms that could be labelled *fies-vriendelijk* (bike friendly). Ten criteria were applied, among them bike parking facilities, cycle-friendly location, showers and dressing rooms, company bikes and bike repair facilities. Sadly enough, only one such business was found in the end.

Contact Fietstersbond for more info: fax: +(32) 3231-4579; e-mail: <fietstersbond@pi.be>.

World Takes Action For Colombia's U'wa People

On September 21, the Colombian Minister of the Environment approved a drilling license to oil company Occidental Petroleum for the first exploratory well on the ancestral lands of the U'wa people in Colombia (see Car Busters #5).

As the US-based company moves into U'wa territory, the company will seek military support, and inevitably there will be confrontations.

Occidental's Cono Limon pipeline, which runs through the northern part of the U'wa lands, has been bombed by guerillas 600 times over the past 13 years, spilling over 1.7 million barrels of oil into the surrounding areas. During the fights both soldiers and rebels have been killed.

The 5,000-strong U'wa community, which has already threatened suicide in case Occidental should start exploiting their sacred grounds, is now calling on a "global crusade to defend life," not only to protect their culture and homelands but "to protect all peoples and ecosystems from the ravages of militarism and multi-national corporate greed."

"Guns and oil will only bring Colombia more violence, not peace" said Danny Kennedy of Berkeley-based Project Underground, "we urgently call on the Colombian government to respect the rights of all Colombians, including the U'wa, and to renew their effort towards a negotiated peace."



International solidarity was already shown on Indigenous People's Day, October 12, celebrated by activists around the world in 21 cities. Among them Geneva, Prague, Amsterdam, Madrid, Santiago, Dublin and San Francisco (see photo), holding actions to demand that the Colombian government and Occidental cancel their plans. Events ranged

from guerilla theater to delegation meetings with Colombian officials, demonstrations, letters of protest, activists scaling buildings to drop banners, teach-ins, a 24-hour vigil and other shows of solidarity.

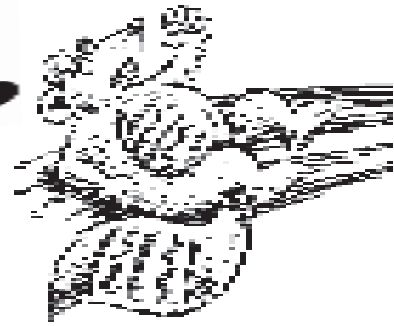
Meanwhile 200 U'wa people have occupied the site of planned oil well Gibraltar 1 in northeast Colombia, prepared to block the drilling slated to begin in the coming weeks. Tribal leaders declared that this permanent settlement is necessary after legal battles and direct appeals to the company and government have failed to date.

- Rainforest Action Network

For more information: <www.ran.org>.

ROADKILL BILL

by KEN AVIDOR



Ken Avidor's Roadkill Bill joins Andy Singer's No Exit in the comic strip war against America's car culture.

Who is Roadkill Bill? He is a cute, oversized, furry squirrel who is run over nearly every week in the pages of the Minneapolis alternative weekly, Pulse.

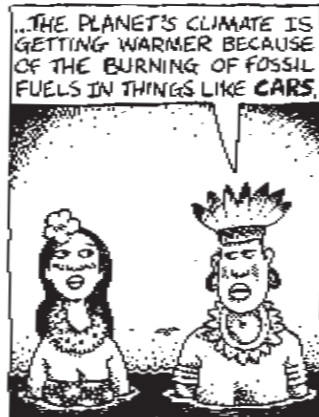
But Roadkill Bill is more than that, he's the spokesanimal for the countless numbers of innocent critters flattened on our highways every day. He also gives voice to the suffering soul of humanity that feels run over, bulldozed, paved

over by industrial technology run amok.

Among the many characters in his strip are Angerman (a bitter, right-wing auto-addict), Mr. Gizmo-Geek (a technology and science fanatic), and Mel the Malformed Frog.

Roadkill Bill sometimes makes a guest appearance in Sunny and Friends, a comic strip appearing in the Minnesota Greens newspaper, The Sunflower. Both comic strips will soon have web sites.

ROADKILL BILL



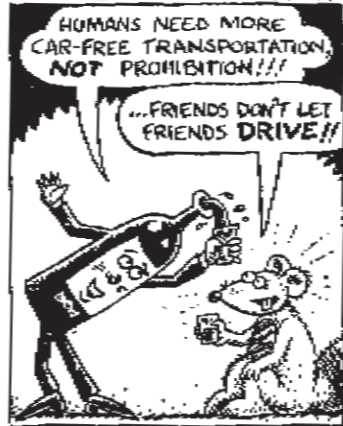
ROADKILL BILL



by KEN AVIDOR 

Note: S.U.V. = Sports Utility Vehicle = 4 x 4

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by **KEN AVIDOR** of



Utopian dream or future reality?

Free Bikes for All

Anya Bernstein

It all started in the '60s, in Amsterdam. A group of subversive artists and activists called Provos attempted to construct a "counter-society" improving every area of Dutch society according to their so-called White Plans. The most famous of these: the White Bike Plan, envisioned as the ultimate solution to the "traffic terrorism of a motorised minority."

This plan proposed to free the city from polluting private automobiles, replacing them with a network of free bicycles painted white.

Provos put the plan into action, providing the first 50 bicycles—all immediately confiscated by the police on the grounds that they "created an invitation to theft." Provos retaliated, stealing a few police bikes.

But despite disbanding in 1967, Provos' vision proved potent. The advantages of free bike programmes were undeniable. They won't solve all traffic-related problems, but can be an important addition to a city's range of transport options—another step towards a "green" transport system.

Transport analyst Peter Duval is impressed by such programmes' "use-efficiency."

"Private bikes waste space all day long, while their rider is busy with other activities, and sit around depreciating," he says. "But community bikes are either being used or are ready for use—the bikes are never parked and unavailable."

Free bike programmes are mushrooming all over Europe and the U.S.

The first one really got off the ground in 1976 in La Rochelle, France, but it quickly got reduced due to many thefts. Today they have 400 bikes avail-

"After difficulties it finally seems that the free bikes have become a permanent part of city life in Copenhagen," Niels Christiansen writes on December 23. "What almost everybody claimed was impossible has now proven possible."

Begun in 1995, the city has today's most famous free bike programme.

"On May 30, 1995 the first 1,000 bicycles rolled into the streets," says Christiansen, who was involved in developing the city bikes from the very beginning. "But in only three days, almost all the bicycles were gone, either stolen or destroyed. That was discouraging. But in 1996, when Copenhagen was European Culture Capital, a final attempt was made: 600 new bicycles were added."

It was a success and the programme expanded from then on. City-Bikes can be collected from the many City-Bike racks throughout the city with the deposit of a 20 Dkr coin in the lock, similar to collecting a luggage carrier at the airport or supermarket. Available from April to December, City-Bikes can only be used in the city centre area, which is specified on maps provided at each City-Bike rack. The bike can be used for an unlimited time, but can only be locked at a City-Bike rack with the special lock provided. In this way, a City-Bike that is not being used is accessible to other people. Furthermore, the free bikes operate in the exact same area as the pay-parking zone, encouraging the use of the bikes rather than cars in the city centre.

The "White Bike" scheme in Amsterdam is a bit different. The bikes are stored in so-called "Depos," consisting of a terminal and two stands with ten bikes each, and located about every 300 metres. If you want to use a bike you insert a "chipcard" and specify your destination (another depot).

Following Copenhagen's lead, the idea of community bikes is spreading to other cities in Europe. Zürich, Switzerland, has about 200 bikes available at four or five stations, where you can

rent the bike for free for a day. You have to leave a deposit and ID. The system is financed by sponsors and subsidies, and the jobs are created through social programmes.

Salzwedel, Germany, has a small 15-bike system primarily used by tourists. At Hamburg University a "CampusBike" is planned with several stands, where you get a bike for a small deposit. Oslo, Sandnes, Stavanger, Trondheim, and Portsmouth also have successful schemes, and many other cities have programmes in the works.

Similarly, many attempts to create White Bike programmes based on refurbished donated bikes exist in North America. In Denver, Colorado, White Bikes are checkered and used as free public transportation. One hundred-fifty yellow bikes are on the streets of Portland, Oregon. However, problems leave some people pessimistic. Olympia Community Bikes existed for two years in Olympia, Washington. As in many other cities with the bike programs, there was a high rate of theft and vandalism of community bikes.

"In the end, this wore down the volunteers' morale and we all decided to call it quits," programme organiser Larry Leveen explains. "U.S. culture is incompatible with community property—it is a culture of private ownership."

His goal, however, remains to get people on bikes, and he simply redirected his energies and opened a worker-owned bike shop that

sells inexpensive used bikes.

Todd Litman, director of Victoria Transport Policy Institute in Canada, feels the same way: "The bikes tend to be trashed (one was thrown up into a tree near our home) and abused, and so they don't look very safe to use. Rather than making bicycling a more legitimate form of transportation, community bike programs seem to reinforce the sense that bicycles are toys, with little value, unworthy of respect."

However, most programmes in the U.S. that work well are based not on the community bikes concept (where the



bikes are placed on the street unlocked for anyone to use at any time) but on the European "bike hub" concept (similar to checking out a library book). Minnesota Yellow Bike Program, the first in the U.S. to introduce the bike hub concept, lets you check out bikes from participating businesses. Yellow Bike users make a one-time, refundable \$10 deposit, sign a waiver, receive a Yellow Bike Card and pedal away.

Financing is one of the main problems that threatens free bike schemes. In 1998, the media first saw Vienna's first free bikes. Both were stolen immediately—one of them later found abandoned outside of town. In April 1999, a free bike programme supposed to be introduced here failed, supposedly because private companies operating the scheme had not found enough advertisers. However, according to Vienna transport activist Daniel Sokolov, "that's what happens when the president of the car lobby, ARBÖ, is at the same time the city's adviser on transport and environment issues."

The second major problem has more to do with the usual human vices: theft and vandalism, which each organisation deals with differently. Some use bikes with odd parts that cannot be used with any other type of bike. The bikes have a unique appearance, and anybody using it outside the defined area will be immediately spotted. Some, like Justin Quinnell of Bristol, are more philosophical, saying the best answer to "Where are all these bikes now?" is "they're all in use." In spite of the fact that "things get nicked," he adds, the whole experience with the free bikes project was the best in his life.

To prevent vandalism, the bikes are often built very robustly and some-

times, as a result, kill the very idea of "free bikes" since 27-kilo bikes are not particularly suitable for longer bike rides, and therefore are not an alternative to privately owned bicycles.

Activists in Arcata, California, have a simpler way of solving the theft problem. They talked to organisers of free bike programmes across the U.S. before setting up their own programme, and discovered that cities should expect a 50 percent loss of bikes each year, assuming no deposit system. So Arcata now gets unclaimed lost bikes from the city police department and other donated used bikes. With part-time volunteers, they're able to simply plan for this amount of loss and the programme continues relatively smoothly.

So sadly the completely free and available-everywhere White Bikes envisioned by Provos are still a utopia. Utopia, however, is translated from Greek as "no place," and because a dream exists "no place" doesn't mean it's impossible to achieve—as long as we don't forget that imagination is a major force for change. n

TRANSLATION

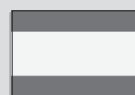
Traduction • Traducción • Übersetzung

La traduction française est fournie dans un supplément inséré dans tous les magazines destinés aux pays francophones. Contactez Car Busters si vous voulez le recevoir dans un pays non-francophone.



Es begann in den 60er Jahren in Amsterdam eine Gruppe junger KünstlerInnen und AktivistInnen, die sich die Provos nannten, wollten eine neue Gesellschaft kreieren und sich gegen die Absurditäten der Konsumgesellschaft

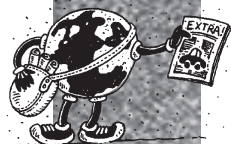
stellen. Sie schufen mehrere Ideenpläne mit Vorschlägen für die Niederlande. Der bekannteste unter ihnen ist der White Bike Plan, welcher die Stadt vom Auto befreien und es durch kostenlose, weiße Fahrräder ersetzen sollte. Wurden diese ersten 50 Räder noch von der Polizei beschlagnahmt und das Programm 1967 beendet, so gibt es heutzutage bereits in einigen Städten ganz offizielle Gemeindefahrräder, unter ihnen Kopenhagen, Amsterdam, Oslo, Portsmouth, Denver und Zürich. Sie alle erkennen kostenlose Leihräder als positive Alternative zum Privatwagen an. Die Ausleihe funktioniert unterschiedlich: von Entleihstellen, die per Pfandmünze funktionieren, bis zu Kartenautomaten oder gar Ausleihstellen ohne Pfandsystem. Die Probleme bleiben die gleichen: Diebstahl und Vandalismus haben bereits einige Fahrradprogramme sterben lassen. Mittel dagegen sind die Verwendung von auffälligen, ungewöhnlichen Rädern oder Ersatzteilen, eine robuste Bauweise oder einfach das Einrechnen des zu erwartenden Verlustes. Leider hat bis heute kein Ort die Originalidee der Provos erfolgreich verwirklichen könnenfreie Fahrräder, überall erhältlich. Dieser Traum muss noch verwirklicht werden. n



Empezó en los sesenta en Amsterdam —un grupo de artistas y activistas jóvenes llamados los Provos quisieron construir una nueva sociedad y llamar la atención sobre las absurdidades de la sociedad de consumo. Idearon diver-

sos planes para Holanda, el más famoso de los cuales fue el Plan de las bicicletas blancas, que estaba llamado a liberar a la ciudad de los coches y reemplazarlos por bicicletas blancas de uso gratuito. Las primeras 50 bicicletas fueron confiscadas por la policía y la experiencia finalizó en 1967, pero en la actualidad algunas ciudades han adoptado sus propios programas de bicicletas de uso gratuito; entre ellas Copenhague, Amsterdam, Oslo, Portsmouth, Denver y Zurich. Todas estas ciudades consideran el préstamo de bicicletas como una alternativa positiva al uso del automóvil privado. El sistema de préstamo funciona de diferentes maneras: desde el depósito de una moneda en aparcamientos especiales, el uso de tarjetas o fichas a sistemas sin ningún tipo de depósitos. Los problemas encontrados son los mismos: los robos y el vandalismo dejaron algunos de estos programas al borde de la muerte. La solución a estos problemas son el uso de bicicletas y recambios de diseño único y especial, construcción sólida, o simplemente asumir los gastos anuales ocasionados. Desgraciadamente ninguna ciudad ha conseguido llevar a la práctica la idea original de los Provos — bicicletas gratis disponibles en todas partes. Este sueño está todavía por realizarse. n





*Good evening, and
welcome to your global
news network, coming to
you quarterly from our
studio in Prague,
with your host, Earth Man.*

Ecuador

Quito Takes the Higher Road

At over 2,800 metres above sea level, the thin air of the high Andes is literally breathtaking. When that same air is a potent mix of particulates, lead and other contaminants, the result can be lifetaking. Such is the state of affairs in Quito, Ecuador.

In the early '90s Quito was faced with a stark choice: act now or irrevocably allow the city's transport system to degrade into a health and economic quagmire. The municipality chose to act. To protect public health and meet the transport needs of its 1.3 million inhabitants, the city created a vision that featured an electric trolley-bus system, feeder services and the provision for non-motorised options.

Unfortunately, the vision most held of Latin American transport is often the smog-laden chaos of Mexico City or the urban sprawl of Sao Paulo. But Quito now seems to have set an example of a financially sustainable route to cleaner and more efficient public mobility.

The vast majority of Quito's population depends upon some form of public transport. Historically this has been provided by independently and privately run bus operators. Such buses are often crowded and uncomfortable while their routes are an unfathomable maze that requires a seasoned insider to interpret.

Contaminant levels have reached the point where citizens are expressing their concerns across a range of media, including ecologically inspired messages painted on walls around the city (see above).

Nepal

Motorcycle Imports Banned

Nepal has banned the import of two-stroke motorcycles in order to improve air quality in the Himalayan kingdom. Bhakta Bahadur Balayar, minister in charge of population and environment, told the daily Kathmandu Post that the ban would be enforced immediately.

- Reuters



Ireland

Priest Opposes Bypass

A parish priest is leading a campaign for Carlow County Council to drop its plan for a major bypass of Carlow town, Ireland. Father John Fingleton is largely supported by residents' groups who say the favoured route would split the country in two and have a devastating effect on local communities. They also say they are not being properly consulted.

Fingleton decries the authorities' "predict and provide" policy—predicting the level of traffic in the future and then building a road wide enough to cater for it—but nonetheless offers a car-based remedy to a car-based problem. He suggests extending the town's northern "relief" road which opened this autumn, keeping traffic out of the town centre.

"An inner relief road can only cater for traffic moving around the town," said county secretary Jim Kearney. "It takes traffic away from the town centre, but a bypass is a totally different thing, catering for traffic which wants a clear route past the town."

This may be true if development is somehow kept from sprouting up along the new road, and from filling in the area between the road and the town. As experience around the world has shown, road building remedies to ease congestion tend not to be solutions at all, as traffic expands to fill the available road space and before long you end up with more roads, more traffic.

- from The Irish Times (Aug. 25)

Norway

National Plan Seeks "Zero-Growth" for Cars

Zero growth in private car traffic is the most ambitious feature of a new national transport plan unveiled by the Norwegian government September 27.

The plan notes that car traffic in the greater Oslo area alone has risen more than 70 percent in recent years, against barely two percent for public transport. Noting that the capital's population is expected to continue to increase, rising well over 10 percent by the year 2015, the plan's authors argue that "such a development calls for very strong measures."

These would include higher tolls for rush-hour travel, restrictive parking regulations and a "substantial" expansion of public transport.

The plan has been greeted with near-universal hostility across the political spectrum. The consensus seems to be that, in attempting to live up to a notional green bias in the shaky coalition government, the administration has slashed proposed funding for road-building projects to which it was already committed, while failing to come up with serious alternatives.

The national newspaper Aften-posten, however, described the plan as "a change of course in Norwegian transport policy" with an emphasis on reducing pollution and improving quality of life in the larger towns and cities.

A government white paper on transport is expected in late 2000.

- ENDS Daily

Contact: Norwegian Transport Ministry; tel: +47 22 24 90 90; <<http://odin.dep.no/sd>>.

France

Minister Urges Europe-Wide Car-Free Day for 2000

On September 27, French Environment Minister Dominique Voynet urged all European cities to hold a "Car-Free Day" next year, joining an experiment which France, Italy and Switzerland carried out the week before.

"The 'Downtown Without My Car' day will take place every year on September 22...In 2000, it will be resolutely European," she stated.

More than 150 cities from Paris to Palermo defied the wrath of car-crazy residents, banning cars from town centres for the day.

In France, it was the second such experiment and drew mixed comments, from enthusiastic environmentalists who called for a week-long car ban next year to angry shopkeepers who saw business shrink.

Voynet said that a survey in France showed that the percentage of residents using their cars downtown had dropped to 5 from 22 percent and pollution had fallen by 20 to 30 percent. An IFOP opinion poll showed 83 percent of residents in the French cities involved wanted the experiment to be repeated, and only four percent believed that the Car-Free Day was a gimmick.

"I don't see the point", said one annoyed driver. Meanwhile hundreds of his fellow annoyed drivers rushed to get into the centre of Paris before the erection of 400 barriers at 7am. Yet, with police coordination resembling a battle plan, cars were effectively blocked from the centre of the city, and the Paris region experienced an impressive car-use reduction of 20 percent. Many saw the day as a success. "I hope to be able for once to open the window of my office," said one Paris commuter, "at last, the air will be breathable."

Not all cities in France were so approving. Lyon Mayor and former Prime Minister Raymond Barre seemed to have missed the point of the day and chose for Lyon not to participate, so activists held their own street closure party in front of the city hall, giving the locals an idea of what the centre could be like without any cars. They wore Raymond Barre masks which said "Raymond Vroom-Vroom" across the forehead. Yet the masked were nearly outnumbered by the media, hot to pick up every angle to this national story.

- Reuters and Le Monde unknowingly contributed to this report

India

New Rickshaw Fights Taj Mahal Air Pollution

A fleet of four dozen newly-designed rickshaws debuted October 29 in front of the Taj Mahal: in a ceremony that many hope will encourage the use of these human-powered vehicles and signal a reversal of decades of destructive air pollution.

The Taj Mahal has suffered greatly this century from the effects of motor vehicle pollution, resulting in a 1994 ban on taxis and buses within a four-km radius of the Taj.

Despite the ban, local officials still had to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of visitors who annually visit the landmark.

Now officials hope the total redesign of a traditional method of transport can help preserve—architectural wonder while also providing convenient, safe and inexpensive access. The fleet of cycle rickshaws, designed and tested during the past two years, are lighter, easier to operate, faster, roomier and more comfortable than the traditional rickshaw, yet cost about the same.

Perhaps best of all, developers say the rickshaw's revolutionary design might trigger the revival of a mode of transport that has fallen out of favor. As Mahatma Gandhi said, "There's more to life than increasing speed."

- Inst. for Transportation & Development Policy

Indonesia

New Attack on Jakarta's Rickshaws

Despite hopes that the new Indonesian government would support the lifting of a ban on human-powered cycle rickshaws, so-called becaks, from Jakarta's streets, it has called on the city council to maintain the ban and to begin an immediate crackdown.

Before the ban, which was imposed in 1988, well over 100,000 becaks operated in Jakarta, providing jobs for poor people and low-cost taxi services that generated no pollution.

With the imposition of the ban, an estimated 40,000 cycle rickshaws were dumped into Jakarta Bay, becaks disappeared from Jakarta's streets, forcing people to take highly polluting and more expensive motorcycle taxis (ojeks) or motorcycle rickshaws (bajaj).

The confiscation of the becaks took away from the people their most valuable, and often their only asset, and drove them into poverty (which they were already in).

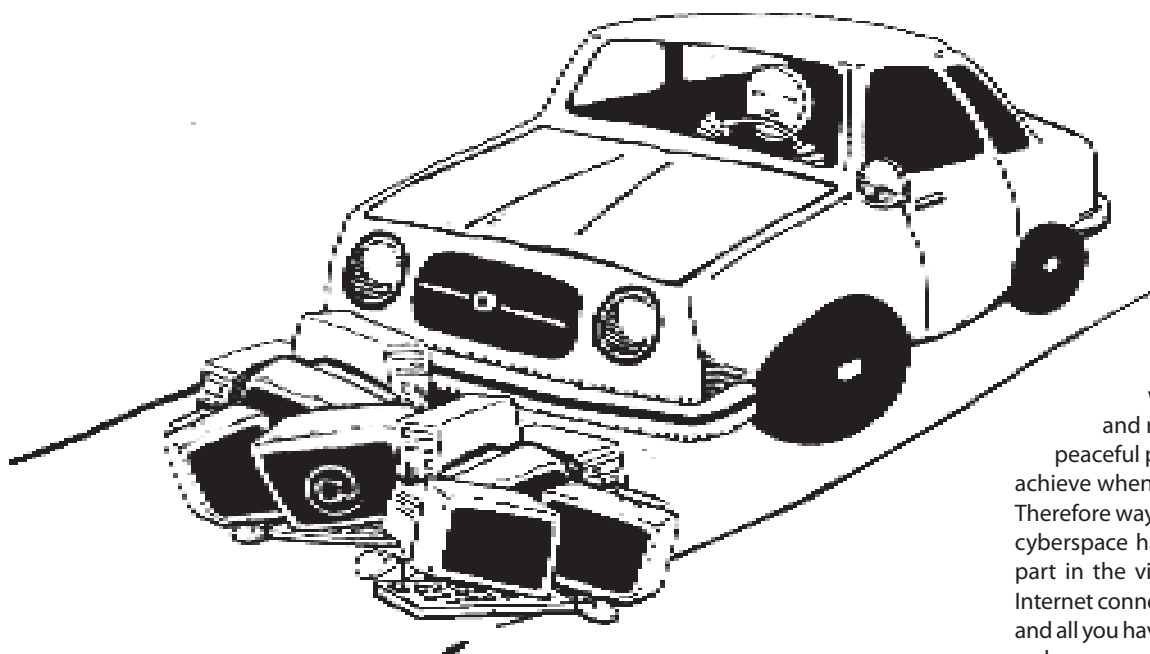
With the political changes since July 1998, the ban was not being enforced, so an estimated 8,000 cycle rickshaws had returned, their status remaining officially illegal.

Megawati Sukarnoputri, currently vice president, had been thought to support the law's repeal. To everyone's surprise, at a rally of 5,000 becak supporters, President Abdurrahman Wahid defended the ban, and together with

continued on page 27

The newly designed rickshaw (below) comes complete with 13 white balls that are actually suspended in mid-air by magic, thanks to the mysterious powers of the Taj Mahal.





Electronic Civil Disobedience

The idea of civil disobedience goes back centuries, but now there's a distinctly third-millennium version, with many possible applications in the car-free movement. Electronic civil disobedience, as the name implies, shifts the focus of activism into cyberspace.

According to the American group Critical Art Ensemble, contemporary activism has had very little impact on military and corporate policy—and therefore, somehow, electronic CD will be different and highly effective. The group believes that today's activists haven't realised we're in the information age, "acting as if they continue to live in the age of early capital." They say that today power can no longer be seen, having been decentralised, dematerialised and relocated into the flow of information—a flow that cannot be stopped by occupying the streets.

The Critical Art Ensemble thinks activism in the next century will be electronic and digital with traditional direct action becoming less and less effective, its strategy and tactics still useful only "if they are used to block the flow of information rather than the flow of personnel."

They say that "even if we somehow manage to live from computerised society, our political opponents, like the federal government and giant corporations, depend heavily on computers. Given increasing computer prevalence and the fact that our political opponents are among the most wired in the world, it is foolish to ignore the computer. Rather, it is important to turn our attention toward the computer, to understand it, and to transform it into an instrument of resistance."

But "don't buy into the myth that technology is going to set us free," author Robert McChesney advises activists today. "Approach the Internet like the people who run our communications system approach it. The Net is one more part of their empire; so it ought to be one more part of our response to their empire. We need to keep fighting on every front."

Like McChesney, many activists will dispute many of the Critical Art Ensemble's statements, but that shouldn't keep us from applying electronic CD in the car-free movement.

Here's three ways how:

1. The Virtual Sit-In:

A sit-in is where a group of people

place themselves in front of some sort of entry way, or inside a building, and remain there as a form of peaceful protest. That's not easy to achieve when the Internet is involved. Therefore ways of occupying "space" in cyberspace have been found. To take part in the virtual sit-in you need an Internet connection and a web browser and all you have to do is load the special web pages written for the action and stay on-line as long as you possibly can. If enough people use this page at the same time, going for the same target, they'll gum up the server and prevent other "ordinary" users getting access. Thus the space in cyberspace is occupied. As I'm writing these lines, the British group Electrohippies is implementing a "virtual sit-in" of the World Trade Organization's Summit in Seattle special conference website. It is intended that this website will be the main conduit for accessing information about the conference, and the events taking place. By taking action against the conference server, and the main WTO server, they restrict the PR staff at the WTO from spreading their agenda.

2. Fun With

Web Sites:

Probably the most well-known incident was when a young British hacker named "JF" hacked into around 300 web sites worldwide and added anti-nuclear imagery and text. But one can find many examples.

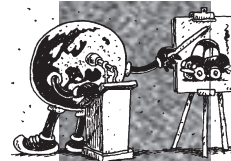
Then there are mirror sites, which in this case are web sites that at first glance look identical to those of your opponents, except

the text or images have been subtly changed to criticise them. By registering a mirror site with "search engines" such as Yahoo, you can bring potential customers to, for example, <www.ford.org> instead of <www.ford.com>.

3. E-Mail and Fax Jams:

Fax Off, Bastards

L.A. Kauffman



These are concerted efforts to bombard e-mail addresses and fax machines with letters of complaint. (See next page for a how-to on fax jams.)

Just as road protests brought thousands to disrupt a road construction, future similar enterprises will be protested acting upon the electronic infrastructure of road-building industry. Just as massive non-violent civil disobedience has been used to shut down car shows or halt work in the offices of car industries and government, massive non-violent email will shut down their counterparts in cyberspace.

Instead of physically occupying a chief executive's office (as did Reclaim the Streets activists with the office of London Underground Ltd. to protest against the privatisation of the London tube, or the anti-Shell protesters who barricaded themselves into Shell's headquarters), we can start occupations in the electronic form, staging a virtual sit-in.

So will the streets become completely useless for protest? Considering that the target of the anti-car movement is to liberate these very streets, the disappearance of street protests would seem the opposite direction to go.

Electronic civil disobedience may well target the core of today's society—its electronic and communications infrastructure—but as a catalyst for mobilising people, the tactic is not very effective, since, compared to traditional civil disobedience, not much inter-action with the public is going on. So without discarding some of the street tactics, we can multiply our tactics by combining actions on the streets and actions in cyberspace.

Find out how at www.gn.apc.org/pmhp/ehippies/. n - AB and RG

Through the tactic of the fax jam, a small group of determined activists armed only with computers and modems can send a very strong message to the opponent of their choice.

These simple instructions were developed after a New York City activist was arrested and charged with aggravated harassment for fax jamming the city's Chamber of Commerce, in protest against its role in the demolition of community gardens. The tips will show you how to conduct a very effective fax jam campaign, without running afoul of the law.

Three Cautions

1. A full-scale fax jam is usually most effective fairly late in a pressure campaign, after less disruptive tactics have failed.
2. The person responsible for dealing with the fax mess is usually someone other than your actual target. If you're doing very intense prolonged fax jams, consider sending letters of sympathy to the clerical worker(s).
3. Any individual who is asked to stop faxing by a specific target should do so, to avoid any possibility of a civil suit.

What You Need

1. A group of activists connected by e-mail.

The members of your list should be committed enough to some time each week taking part in a fax jam.

2. The fax number(s) of your opponents.

This step can sometimes entail a bit of research, for it requires first pinpointing specific individuals who

have the power to take the action you want; say the City Commissioner who has the power to pull a community garden off the auction block.

The best way to get the actual fax number is the direct route: asking for it. As in, "What's the number for faxes to so-and-so?" The receptionist will almost always give the number without further ado. Note: If you're planning to go after multiple targets in a single institution, try to get all the numbers you need before the fun begins.

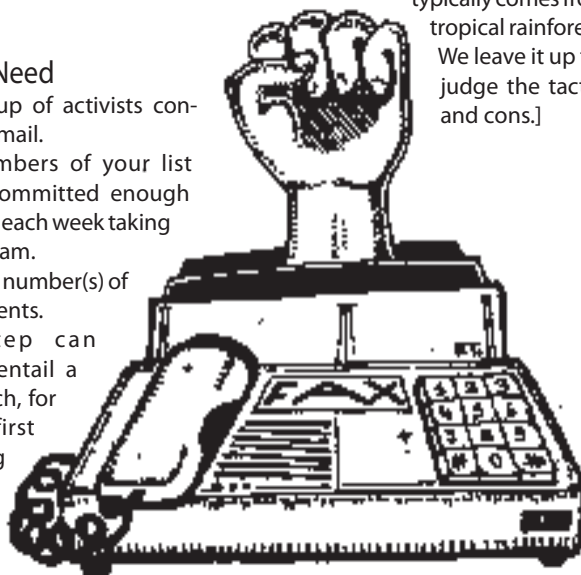
3. A coordinator to call the jams.

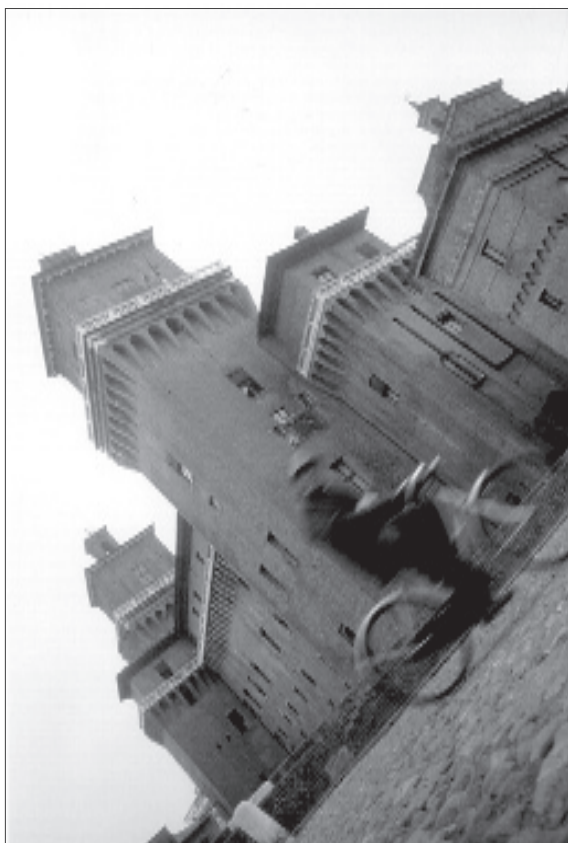
Some jams are planned well in advance (to fall, say, on the anniversary of some heinous deed); these are best announced through an alert mailed one to two days beforehand. Others are called as a nearly instantaneous response to an event.

What the faxes do next is write a letter to the target(s) of choice, using their word processing software. They write in 72-point type, one word per page. The resulting saved file can be hundreds of pages long.

At that point, all that's necessary to send the fax is to fire up the fax-modems and, using any standard fax software, send the file. One copy of the letter should also be sent in standard type, so as to make your target aware what all the mess is about. Voila: Major disruption with minimal effort. n

[Ed. note: This action, of course, results in an extreme waste of paper, and standard roll-type fax paper typically comes from virgin tropical rainforest wood. We leave it up to you to judge the tactic's pros and cons.]





When in Italy, Do As the Ferrarans

Tooker Gomberg

respect just trying to cross the street. But it's in the heart of Ferrara, perhaps in its soul, where something special happens.

Ferrara, population 140,000, sports 100,000 bicycles. Thirty percent of all trips are by bike, which is higher than in Copenhagen. The town is small and compact, with almost every destination within an easy five-km ride.

Dating back to medieval times, the streets of the old city are cobbled with stones and bricks. Most of the old part of town is off limits to private cars, and motorists can park their cars at the edge, rent a bike or catch a taxi or bus. A few streets are closed to motorised traffic altogether, reserved only for shoe and pedal power.

Five-hundred-year-old churches share space with ancient watch-towers, and a moat surrounds the town hall. The top of the city's ancient wall doubles as an elevated bike path.

I joined the flow. Opposite the 14th-century Estense Castle I plunked down 18,000 lire (about US\$10) and pedalled off to look for what made Ferrara tick. No petrol for this traveller, just a few steaming cappuccinos (cappuccos, as they say) and an occasional hazelnut gelato.

Down the medieval Via Volte I rode, and stumbled upon a vaulted bike shop piled high with dishevelled and dented steeds so ancient they seemed to date from the days of Caesar. No shortage of bicycle repairs to be done in this town.

In Germany and the Netherlands specially signed bicycle paths and paint on pavement make it clear that the bicycle has its place in the transport engineers' bag of tricks. In Ferrara there are few special facilities or engineering for bikes. Without fanfare cyclists just do their thing.

In a complex world smothered in noxious tailpipe fumes, solutions to

our traffic woes seem huge and costly. Maybe they needn't be. The local Ferrara newspaper headline, speaking of a nearby town, put it this way: "Comaccio Favours Stopping the Car, Yes to the Pedestrian Island."

The bicycle has woven its way into the local culture. From free white bicycles for city workers to do their errands, to a special discount Bicard for tourists, the bike is everywhere.

Hotels offer the free use of bicycles to their guests, the bikes proudly parked outside the hotel's front door. By the train station one can hop aboard the Bicibus, a special bus that takes passengers and their bikes to the Adriatic coast, less than 60 km to the east.

"In other places young people move on to scooters and motor-cycles," a city planner told me. "In Ferrara they keep riding their bikes. The bicycle is popular here because people aren't in too much of a hurry."

Special bicycle parking racks are lacking, so people just lean their bikes against any wall and clip a flimsy lock around a wheel. Theft isn't a huge issue when there are so many bikes to go around.

Snapshots from Ferrara: women gliding along with shopping bags swinging from the bars; men in ties slowly meandering on half-flat tires; kids pedalling their way to school; a couple clinging while he pedals and she sits on the crossbar. Helmets? Who needs 'em; cycling is like walking here. You don't need anything special: not a fancy bike, not a helmet, no spandex required. n

Al roads lead to Rome, they say. But watch your life trying to cross the street outside Rome's Termini train station. If you're not fleet-footed a zipping car or a zigzagging moped just might zap you.

I longed to get away from the traffic and smog, so instead of battling Rome's road warriors I travelled the steel rails north to Ferrara. Situated mid-way between Venice and Bologna, Ferrara is reputed to be Italy's best city for cycling where, legend has it, kids learn to ride even before they can walk.

Stepping out of the Ferrara train station, I noticed something was clearly different. A thousand bikes were parked in a jumble, many askew and toppling over. A professor, unlocking the flimsiest of locks, told me: "I have six bikes. Two in Pisa for when I go there, two for getting around Ferrara, and a nicer mountain bike and a road bike, too."

It began to rain, so I scurried to a nearby phone booth. What a strange shape, I thought, until I realised it was specially designed for people on bikes! How civilised. As the rain continued, cyclists responded by riding with umbrellas. Simple!

Not that the whole town is a cycling paradise. The outskirts are more "normal," with trucks and cars cascading down the asphalt; one can't get no

Que Viva la Ciudad

"Living City" coalition launches an international campaign to save Santiago from a devastating urban highway project.

For the first time in Chilean history, a coalition of community organisations opposed to a major urban highway project has launched an international campaign. Directed not only at the companies and investors which are interested in the project, the campaign also targets public opinion in the companies' countries of origin.

The project is the controversial "Costanera Norte" or "East-West System," sponsored by the Chilean Public Works Ministry, a 33-km highway that would cut the capital city of Santiago in half, devastating some of its most historical and culturally significant neighbourhoods, including the central market area and the "Barrio Bellavista," considered the Chilean equivalent of New York's Greenwich Village, Toronto's Yorkville or London's Soho. It would also chop chunks off San Cristobal Hill and the Parque Forestal, important urban parks given Santiago's chronic shortage of greenspace.

The Chilean government is offering well over US\$80 million in subsidies to try and get the flagship project off the rocks, where it has ended up, in the face of widespread opposition from community groups, transport engineers, health care workers, environmentalists and urban planners, who have united to criticise the project's devastating impact.

The freeway would basically serve Santiago's upper-class neighbourhoods, allowing drivers to reach the city centre, the airport or connections to their homes on the beach at speeds of 80-100 km/hour. Only one out of every five daily commutes is made in a car, but cars contribute 50 to 80 percent of

Santiago's worst pollutants.

Transport engineers have been among its most vocal critics, saying the project is so badly flawed there's no way it could be improved enough to make it worthwhile.

Greenpeace and CODEFF, which represents Friends of the Earth in Chile, have both committed their support to the international campaign. This will initially focus on France, Spain and Italy, the main countries of origin for companies interested in the project.

Among these companies are the world giants Egis Bouygues and GTM, both of whose top executives have faced serious charges at home in France for what Le Monde called "a pre-



agreed system for embezzling public funds," involving the formation of a cartel to divvy up contracts for building schools near Paris, payment of bribes to important political parties, and other charges investigated by French courts. Bouygues has been fined repeatedly for its participation in cartels.

Impregilo, of Italy, which has teamed up with the Chilean firm Fe Grande, has also faced charges in the past, for mistreatment of workers (Owen Falls, Kampala, August 1999), not meeting contractual obligations (Washington, August 1999), and bribery (Highlands Water Project, Lesotho).

Meanwhile, the two large Spanish firms Cintra and Sacyr, which already are actively building several highway concessions in Chile, have indicated they are more interested in the project now that guarantees have increased and the amount of private investment required has dropped.

With the aid of like-minded citizens' groups around the world, "Living City" (Ciudad Viva), the 25-member coalition opposing the project, plans to take its case to investors and consumers if necessary, to prevent the destruction of local economies based on small-scale commerce (open air markets, street

fairs, restaurants, tourism, recreation, galleries and theatres), along with residential areas in the physical and artistic heart of the city.

"We'll continue fighting until this project is dismantled, as occurred with the Embarcadero Freeway in San Francisco, or other similar projects elsewhere in the world," said Lanfranco, spokesperson for the coalition of community groups representing 50,000 people.

For more information, contact Rosa Moreno, Greenpeace Chile; fax: +(56) 204-0162; <climate@greenpeace.cl>.

Take Action

Please target some of the European companies interested in building Costanera Norte, however you see fit:

1. CINTRA, via Ecovías (Spain), Iñigo Meirás, Director de Autopistas en España y Latinoamérica, Andrés Bello 2711, Piso 18, Santiago, CHILE; tel: +(56) 335-2984; fax: +(56) 335-2984.

2. EGIS BOUYGUES (France), Martin Bouygues, Bouygues SA, 1 Avenue Eugene Freyssinet, 78061 Saint-Quentin-Yvelines, France; tel: +(33) 1-306-02311; fax: +(33) 1-306-04861; <www.bouygues.fr>.

3. Philippe Montelimard, Gerente General, Internacional Autopistas Chilenas Cruz del Sur 133, Of. 302., Santiago, CHILE; tel: +(56) 246-1363; fax: +(56) 246-1242.

4. Rutas del Pacífico, Mauricio Gatica, Gerente General, Avda Vitacura 2771, Of. 1101, Santiago, CHILE; tel: +(56) 236-5560; fax: +(56) 236-5561.

5. IMPREGILO (Italy), Franco Carraro, Chairman, Franco Vischi, General Manager and Vice Chairman, Via G. Griziotti, 4, 20154 Milano, tel: +(39) 02-48004.



You don't need to have a PhD to find out about what the PhDs are doing... Car Busters guarantees 100% non-academic language in this section—or your money back.

Rich "Owe" Poor Billions

Hundreds of billions of dollars. That's what the world's poorest nations are owed by the world's richest countries for the environmental damage they inflict on the planet, says a report released September 20 by Christian Aid.

The "Who Owes Whom?: Climate Change, Debt, Equity and Survival" report says the developed world's bill on its carbon dioxide account is three times as large as its financial debt from the developing world. It states that rich countries' demands for debt repayments are morally illegitimate and undermine the ability of poor countries to achieve internationally agreed poverty reduction targets.

"We constantly think of the world's poorest countries as being in debt to us, and force them to adopt draconian economic austerity measures as a result," said Andrew Simms, a policy adviser at Christian Aid. "But these debts are dwarfed by the huge and rising carbon debt owed by the rich countries to the global community, and for which, yet again, the poorest are paying."

The report takes the amount of carbon dioxide emissions each human could be responsible for in order to reach the Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change's target of a 60 percent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Using this system, heavily indebted poor countries are in credit on their climate account because of their underuse or efficient use of fossil fuels. Meanwhile the developed world is deeply in debt.

- The Guardian

Large Airports: Bad for Public Health

On September 2, the Health Council of the Netherlands published a report titled "Public Health Impact of Large Airports." Prepared by an international group of experts, the report confirms what many people expected, but what few airports want to acknowledge: airports and the surrounding activities have a negative impact on public health.

Respiratory complaints decrease with distance from Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport, for example.

The study notes that unlike most

traffic and industrial pollution sources, aircraft emissions are free from regulatory control. However, pollutant levels around large airports are similar to those in urbanised areas and are to a large extent determined by road traffic rather than air-traffic emissions.

The report's authors end with a rather damning conclusion:

"If civil aviation is not a part of internationally accepted mobility policies that take into account both short and long term, local and global environmental and health impacts, then the aviation endeavour that started with the Wright Brothers might become an important contribution to permanent loss of health and life."

The report (in English) can be ordered by e-mail <order@gr.nl>, or at the secretariat of the Health Council: tel: +31-70-340-7520.

Society, Distrust and Cars

How do cars affect our overall relations to society? This is a question that Karin Sandqvist of the Stockholm Institute of Education has been exploring. She notes that the distance cars put between their occupants and their neighbours—by enclosing them in steel boxes—forms a large part of their appeal. She points out that walking, cycling and public transport put us in "a more direct and unprotected contact" with society.

Regretting the lack of published research, Sandqvist suggests that driving encourages us to see other drivers only as potential causes of accidents, people who get in the way, and "traffic"—hence a hindrance. The same problem doesn't occur walking in a pedestrian zone.

Like the unconscious assumption that the government will continue to provide a postal service tomorrow, Sandqvist hypothesises that public transport encourages a "trust" in society. Unlike driving, where one is only reliant on oneself and the car, catching public transport involves putting oneself in someone else's hands, assuming the bus driver won't stop the bus and walk away, and that your fellow passengers won't jump up and kill you. Whether this is really a "trust" or just an unthought-out assumption, catching public transport at least involves an interaction with society that doesn't include seeing it as the enemy.

But do people learn to question society if they passively accept services provided, without further thought? This is one of many questions coming out of Sandqvist's ideas, a topic of research generally ignored.

Sandqvist can be contacted at the

Dept. of Child and Youth Studies, Stockholm Institute of Education, Box 47308, 10074 Stockholm, Sweden; <Karin.Sandqvist@lhs.se>.

Climate Change Could Be Worse Than Expected

Until now no one could predict with any certainty the general consequences of climate change, as all predictions came from simulations resting on complex numerical models.

Ursula Röhl (University of Brême) and Richard Norris (Massachusetts Institute of Oceanography) propose an alternative to numerical models, one that shows climate change could have much more dramatic consequences than previously thought.

In analysing core samples of marine sediment, the researchers found traces of a particularly turbulent episode in the history of climate, an episode which could repeat itself in the decades to come.

This event, 55 million years ago, provoked a massive extinction of species. Until now no one could say what were the causes of this catastrophe. But now, in the heart of the sediment cores taken from the Atlantic, this period of time is marked by an incredible excess of an organic variety of carbon, called 13C.

According to the two oceanographers, the origin of this recently-discovered isotope comes from methane trapped on the ocean floor. Under normal conditions (2°C, with the high pressure found on the ocean floor) a large quantity of methane attaches itself to water molecules, forming "clathrates," basically stable methane ice.

But with a slight rise in global temperature, this trapped methane frees itself, and an enormous quantity of greenhouse gases rises through the ocean and into the atmosphere.

This is probably what happened 55 million years ago. The two oceanographers estimate that 1,200 to 2,000 gigatonnes of carbon were released into the atmosphere, with disastrous consequences that lasted 1,000 years. It took 120,000 years to return to "normal."

Today we are releasing five times more carbon into the atmosphere than during the period studied.

- Ciel & Espace

...Controversy

continued from page 13

praising the man and his accomplishments, but ends up exposing his Nazi sympathies and the results of his "mass motorisation" legacy. (See page 22, "Electronic Civil Disobedience.")

Of course none of this is for the well-heeled established NGO. In fact, this type of action would be happening a lot more if activist groups weren't trying to be so respectable. But just think of the potential impact that we're missing out on.

Just think of how—with something big, visual and shocking—we could steal the show from the official European-wide Car-Free Day this coming September.

The tactic has been ignored for far too long. It's up to all of us to resurrect the lost art of scandal.

- Randy Ghent, Car Busters

The NGO Structure Itself is to Blame

Human rights organisations and human rights work, as we now know them, started in Nigeria in the late '80s, at about the same time that we were being told that a "new world order" has come as a result of the "end of the cold war."

While some may consider the advent of Northern-funded and report-writing human rights organisations as a positive development, the reality is that the development is mainly the design of imperialist forces who seek to extinguish the struggles of exploited peoples by promoting the isolation of issues for "campaigns." So, we now have organisations "campaigning" on prisons, shelter rights, women

rights, forest protection, labour rights, etc. without addressing the fundamental economic and political structures in society that create the conditions for these crises to emerge.

With the new buzzword "capacity building," NGOs (Non-Governmental Organisations) are urged to become technologically better equipped to network amongst each of their offices, and they become isolated from the people's movements from which their founders emerged in the first place. So now, instead of organising in the streets and in the communities, today's NGOs are attending human rights conventions, writing grant

applications, and networking with each other.

The Abacha regime ended last year, and General Abubakar took over power, the regime has been expressing commitments to respecting the human rights of citizens. Political prisoners have been set free.

Some kind of election has been held. The so-called international community, which actually means the U.S. and the E.U., are happy even though a constitution was decreed into existence by a few soldiers, only three political parties are allowed by decree. The international community is happy because Africa's largest market is again ready for "privatisation and commercialisation." The policy has been to cooperate with NGOs, who are succumbing to the blackmail.

But the people are fighting back as peoples movements seeking for self-determination are emerging. Despite the human rights posturing of the soldiers, tens of Ijaw youths who were drumming and singing in the streets were murdered by the troops called in to protect the oil wells that the youths seek to shut down, in protest against the destruction of their communities.

- Isaac Usuoka
Environmental Rights Action



...World News

continued from page 21

Jakarta Governor Sutiyoso called on the city council to not revoke the law.

"The ban on becaks operating in the city was indeed meant as a measure to eradicate poverty," he said. "Jakarta is the capital city. It is not supposed to have becaks on its streets anymore."

While the President did call on authorities to create new jobs for the pedicab drivers, details were vague, and many people were encouraged to participate in a controversial "transmigration program."

- Walter Hook, ITDP; Michael Reppogle, Environmental Defense Fund

You can take action by faxing a letter of protest to (or organising a fax jam against) President Abdurrahman Wahid of Indonesia [fax: +(62) 21-348-4004] and to Governor Sutiyoso [fax: +(62) 21-384-8653].

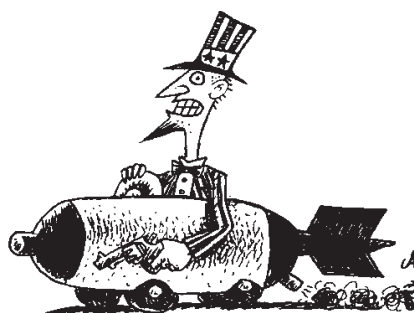
United States

BP Alaska Pleads Guilty

British Petroleum Exploration Alaska pleaded guilty to the illegal disposal of hazardous waste on Alaska's North Slope and agreed to spend US\$22 million in civil and criminal penalties. The company must establish an environmental management system for all of its U.S. operations.

This is the first judgement of its kind against the oil industry in a U.S. federal prosecution. The case exposes BP's environmental record as it gets ready to acquire at least 70 percent control of North Slope oil drilling, pipeline and tanker transport capacity.

- Environment News Service





The all-new Car Busters winter line of très chic mail order items will make you the best looking (okay, best resourced) activist on the streets.

Three Books from Wolfgang Zuckermann



The illustrated children's book "Family Mouse Behind the Wheel" by Wolfgang Zuckermann teaches children at a young age the problems of car culture, with a healthy dose of anthropomorphism and a smattering

of English text.

Zuckermann's classic "The End of the Road: From World Car Crisis to Sustainable Transportation," however, requires one's full attention, being 300 pages of solid information analysing today's predicament and offering a range of solutions to end the auto-age.



Then there's Zuckermann's newly published "Alice in Wonderland"—"a curious mixture of nonsense, social satire and surrealist fairy tale, which takes the classical Alice through the dreary landscape of suburban America." Very entertaining and insightful. In the spirit of the original Alice, with its rhymes, puns and assorted odd characters. Also 20 Ecos.



Wise Fool Basics

Giant puppet building, puppet masks, tips and tricks for street theatre, how to build stilts, lanterns. This fantastic book by K. Ruby of Wise Fool Puppet Intervention is full of useful information for making actions eye-catching,

imaginative and endlessly creative.

North Americans should order the book directly from Wise Fool, 2633 Etna Street, Berkeley CA 94709, priced on a sliding scale from US\$7 to \$15, plus \$2 postage.

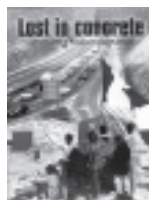


Direkte Aktionen oder Die kleine Blockadefibel

Das Beste aus dem berühmt-berüchtigten Buch Road Raging: Top Tips for Wrecking Roadbuilding. Hilfreiches für Protestcamps, Strassenparties, Kranblockaden, Car Walking, Subvertising, Informationen zu Rechtlichem und Gruppenprozessen, plus viele hilfreiche Bilder und Fotos.

Lost in Concrete

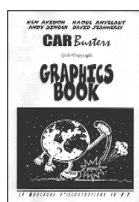
"Lost in Concrete: An Activist Guide to European Transport Policies" gives you a thorough look at the Trans-European Networks road schemes. It contains TENs history, who's lobbying for them, their potential effects on health, culture, jobs and regional economies, their alternatives. It also includes lots of general transport information, such as facts on air pollution, climate change and time pollution.



Graphics Booklet / Brochure de Dessins

This 44-page graphics booklet brings together all the best transport-related graphics on file at Car Busters, including information on how to produce attractive posters and fliers. They can be reproduced freely (for non-profit purposes) by local groups for their leaflets, posters, agit-prop, etc.

Specify English or French version; 10 Ecos (add 2 Ecos postage outside Europe).



Direct Action Manual

Back in print. Edited by a former Earth First! Journal co-editor, it's a 152-page almost comprehensive guide to direct action tactics developed around the world. Lots of useful diagrams and illustrations.



Detour Catalogue

The Detour Catalogue of Transportation and Urban Ecology contains over 60 books and other resources available by mail order from Detour's Toronto office; or skip the catalogue and look at <www.web.



net/~detour>.

The Art and Science of Billboard Improvement

Brought to you by the "Billboard Liberation Front and Friends," this nifty 12-page booklet gives you all the practical details for altering car ads and advertising billboards to say something a little more socially responsible.



Not finding what you need for your campaign?

Let us know, and we'll try to track it down and include it here.

"Towards Car-Free Cities I" Conference Proceedings

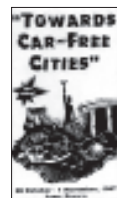
These 40-page proceedings are both an account of the international gathering that launched Car Busters and a manual for anyone planning a similar event—everything from running a tripod workshop to conference logistics.

Available free by e-mail (Word 6.0 attachment) or 7 Ecos by post.

Lyon Conference Video

This 36-minute video documents the work and actions of the first "Towards Car-Free Cities" conference. Use it to introduce others to the issue or to inspire those already involved.

Note: It's in the Euro-pean "PAL" format.



La Liberté de Circuler

Publié en 1991 par Colin Ward sous le titre "Freedom to Go: After the Motor Age", ce livre explore la question de la "libre circulation" dans une perspective éco-anarchiste. Cette version française, sous-titrée "Pour en finir avec le mythe de l'auto-mobile", a été publiée à Lyon en 1993.



Casseurs de Pub

C'est le premier numéro de la version francophone-independente du magazine canadien Adbusters, attaquant non seulement la culture automobile mais aussi des grands surfaces, les fast foods, la sur-consommation, le capitalisme et la vie quotidienne. Le tout dans un format graphique très professionnel. 7.5 Ecos.



Issue n°1: Towards Car-Free Cities conference • Westernisation means more roads and cars • Park and Ride on trial • The sexualisation of cars • Street party how-to guide



Car "Cancer" Stickers

Big, hard-to-remove "cancer warning" stickers for cars. Available in French, German or English. 10 Ecos for 25.



"One Less Car" Bike Stickers

The famous One Less Car sticker has just become multilingual. To explain to drivers that your bike is not a part of the traffic problem, we now have One Less Car in Norwegian/Swedish/Danish, Serbian/Croatian, Romanian and Polish, as well as French, German, Spanish and English. More languages coming soon. The stickers are also water-resistant (more so than the last print run).

5 Ecos for 5, 15 Ecos for 25. Specify language, obviously. Please help distribute these stickers—feel free to re-sell them through your group or infoshop.

"Free the Streets"

This 68-page A4-sized reader was produced while preparing the first Towards Car-Free Cities conference. It's filled with articles, ideas, poorly reproduced photos and contacts for car-free activism in Europe. Cost: 10 Ecos.



Stickers for Selfishly Parked Cars

Fight back against cars parked on pavements (side-walks). Stick these mini-stickers on obstructing cars to remind the owners that pavements are for people, not parking.

Send 2 Ecos for 25 stickers.



Stop-Sign Improvement

Forty-six centimetres long. Bright red. One word: "DRIVING." These big glossy stickers are just the right size to go under the word "STOP" on stop signs. You can see them all over in the streets of Berkeley, California. Why not your town, too?

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Want to give a Car Busters subscription as a gift to a friend? Just send along the name and address of the gift recipient, and Car Busters will send a card in your name along with the first issue sent. Regular subscription rates apply, of course.

THE "ECO" SYSTEM

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| Denmark | 3.8 Kroner | 91.2 Kroner |
| Estonia | 3.6 Kroons | 86.4 Kroons |
| Finland | 3 Marks | 72 Marks |
| France | 3.4 Francs | 82 Francs |
| Germany | 1 Mark | 24 Marks |
| Greece | 150 Drachme | 3,600 Drachme |
| Hungary | 36 Forint | 864 Forint |
| Ireland | 0.35 Pounds | 8.4 Pounds |
| Italy | 1,000 Lira | 24,000 Lira |
| Latvia | 0.09 Lats | 2.16 Lats |
| Lithuania | 0.5 Litas | 12 Litas |
| Luxembourg | 21 Francs | 500 Francs |
| Macedonia | 9 Denar | 216 Denar |
| Malta | 0.2 Lira | 4.8 Lira |
| Netherlands | 1.1 Guilders | 26.4 Guilders |
| Norway | 4.4 Kroner | 105 Kroner |
| Poland | 0.8 Zloty | 19.2 Zloty |
| Portugal | 70 Escudos | 1,680 Escudos |
| Romania | 895 Lei | 21,500 Lei |
| Russia | 2.6 Rubels | 62.4 Rubels |
| Slovakia | 6.3 Koren | 150 Koren |
| Slovenia | 47 Tolar | 1,128 Tolar |
| Spain | 70 Pesetas | 1,700 Pesetas |
| Sweden | 5 Kroner | 120 Kroner |
| Switzerland | 0.9 Francs | 21.6 Francs |
| Turkey | 93,050 Lira | 2,200,000 Lira |
| Ukraine | 0.32 Hryvnya | 7.7 Hryvnya |
| U.K. | 0.38 Pounds | 9 Pounds |
| USA | 0.7 Dollars | 17.5 Dollars |
| Yugoslavia | 1 Dinar | 24 Dinar |

Single copies cost 5 Ecos (includes shipping).

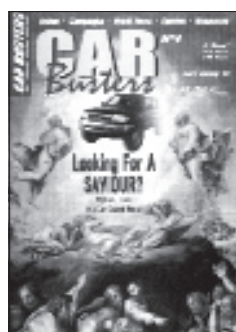
Bulk orders of five or more of each issue cost 3 Ecos per copy.



Issue n°2: Reclaim the Streets goes global • Oil crisis to trigger car-free planet • Lobbying your city council • First car-walking, now "car biking" • How to cure a car addict



Issue n°3: France's first day without cars • Capitalism, fascism, car culture • Moscow public transport sickens • Y2K • DIY bike lanes • Make your own cardboard car



Issue n°4: Direct action gets imaginative • Sex, lies and advertising • Traffic generation and evaporation • Road building puts Slovakia in debt • Shell in Nigeria

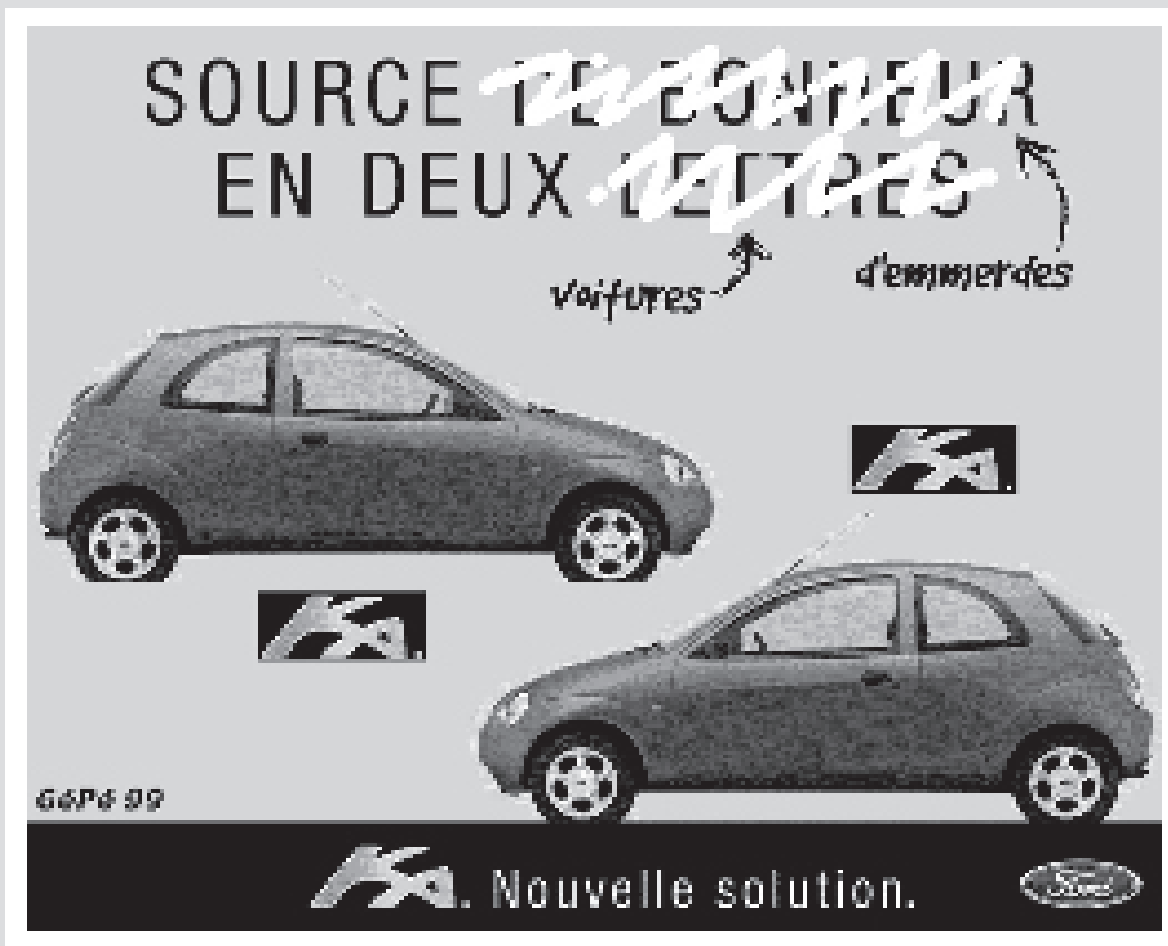


Issue n°5: Industry's response to global warming • Why air traffic keeps growing and growing • Exxon Valdez ten years later • Car-free rhetoric vs. reality



Issue n°6: A cultural history of the car • How cars have shaped our cities' form • Ecocity visions • Revolutionary urbanism • Futurescapes

Distribution orders of five or more copies cost 3 Ecos per copy (you sell them at 6 Ecos and keep the difference).



This subvertisement of Ford's "Ka" car, comes to us indirectly by "Guillaume" from France. "Ka ka," actually "caca," is a sort of baby word for "shit." So that will help you understand this parody.

Send In Your Car-Ad "Subvertisements"!



Für ein Abo in Deutschland überweise bitte 24 DM an Daniel Sokolov, KontoNr. 5422035 bei Hypo Vereinsbank Berlin, BLZ 10020890. In Österreich überweise 175 ATS an Daniel Sokolov, KontoNr. 00032097298 bei Erste Bank, BLZ 20111; Verwendungszweck: «CB ABO», dein Name und E-mail- oder Postadresse. Du kannst auch Bargeld oder Schecks in US\$, FF und £ schicken.

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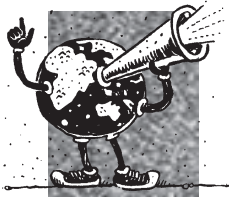
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* see page 29 to find the cost of a subscription in your country's currency.

Car Busters accepts cheques in US\$, FF, GB£ and Czech Crowns; and cash in any currency.

Announcements

Annonces • Anzeigen • Anuncios



Have something to announce to the rest of the car-free movement? Send it in by March 15 for the spring issue. Believe it or not, it will cost you nothing.

Winter Holidays In Switzerland!

A Swiss referendum to be held in March 2000 will decide whether private car traffic should be cut by 50 percent within the next 10 years.

Initiated by the Swiss organisation Umverkehr, this idea, which at the same time promotes public transport, car-free zones and other alternatives, needs a lot of publicity.

For this reason a promotion tour by bike, on foot, and on rollerskates is being planned: five branches will start on January 6 in different parts of Switzerland. On the way actions are planned to inform the public about the topic. After six weeks the branches meet in Bern on February 19 for a final action.

Contact Umverkehr to participate for a couple of days or even the whole time, to help out or to learn about the ideas of carrying the referendum to other European countries: Umverkehr, Elisabethenstr. 16, 8004 Zürich, Switzerland; tel/fax: +(41) 1-242-72-76; e-mail: <zh@umverkehr.ch>; <www.umverkehr.ch>.

Summer Holidays In Chicago!

Bike Summer '99 in San Francisco was a success: workshops, rides, actions, hundreds of visitors from around the globe, all to promote the fun of bike riding.

Now, bicycle-, transit- and anti-car activists in Chicago are planning the sequel: Bike Summer 2000—the Chicago Cyclennium. Starting with the July 28 Critical Mass and continuing with dozens of events throughout August, the basic structure will remain the same: a loose framework of individually organised events.

The goal is quite simple: to create an environment where information can be exchanged, friendships formed, and creative energies recharged.

Check out www.bikesummer.org and join the listserve. For more info or to get involved contact <tcourour@yahoo.com> or call +(1-773) 342-2058.

Car-Free Listserve Started

An e-mail listserve just got started for people who are interested in living

without a car. To sign up send an e-mail to <Carless-subscribe@onelist.com>.

You can find a little more info by looking up <www.onelist.com> and searching for "Carless."

Virtual Gallery of Radical Arts

Check out the new web site <www.subvertise.org> of fully shared resources, featuring the best radical arts: images that have inspired people to action, with themes ranging from squatting to nuclear energy and cars. You are invited to use this gallery as your own as well as send in any radical arts you've seen or made. "We do not have time, energy or politeness to ask permission for contributions," the authors claim, "we're stealing your best work regardless!"

In compensation, they encourage visitors to contact you directly for more info/to help you/to buy your work, etc. For more information, e-mail <conterfeet@excite.co.uk>.

Online Sustainable Urban Travel Resources

Comprehensive Sustainable Urban Travel bibliographies, with a particular emphasis on cycling and walking, all regularly updated, together with a list of relevant organisations, contact details and links are now available online at <<http://omni.ac.uk:8099/>>. Click on "Planning Bibliographies" and then "Sustainable Urban Travel."

Bust-

Announcements

Car Busters on the Move

As global capital is becoming more nomadic, mobile, and liquid, so are we! Finally getting fed up with croissants but not willing to lower our standards, we will soon be moving to another city full of fairy-tale castles—Prague, capital of the Czech Republic.

We have already gone for a week-long visit, found a nice office in a building with other groups and checked out some interesting projects and veggie-cafes.

Envisioned moving date is mid-January. Anyone have any information on how to move furniture, computers, books and a couple of thousand of magazines without using a car?

With some of the Busters, namely Domencia Settle and Anya Bernstein leaving shortly before this issue, and fellow Buster Sina Arnold soon to follow, our small but eager staff will also undergo some changes, and we are excited to welcome Ozgur Ozturk from Turkey, Debbie Waters from the U.K. and Ivana Jakubkova from Prague in the editorial collective.

Towards Car-free Cities II

Following the general nomadic tendencies, the conference focusing on Eastern Europe avoiding the transport mistakes of the West, was also relocated and will be happening from April 10-15 in Timisoara, Romania.

The programme is mainly still as planned: around 70 people from all over Europe will exchange skills, information and experience and train themselves on everything from working with the media to doing lobbying and organising direct action.

The preparation meeting will take place in Bratislava January 15-16. If you would like to get involved contact Matus at Slobodna Alternativa, Starometska 6, 81103 Bratislava, Slovakia, or at <sa@changenet.sk>.

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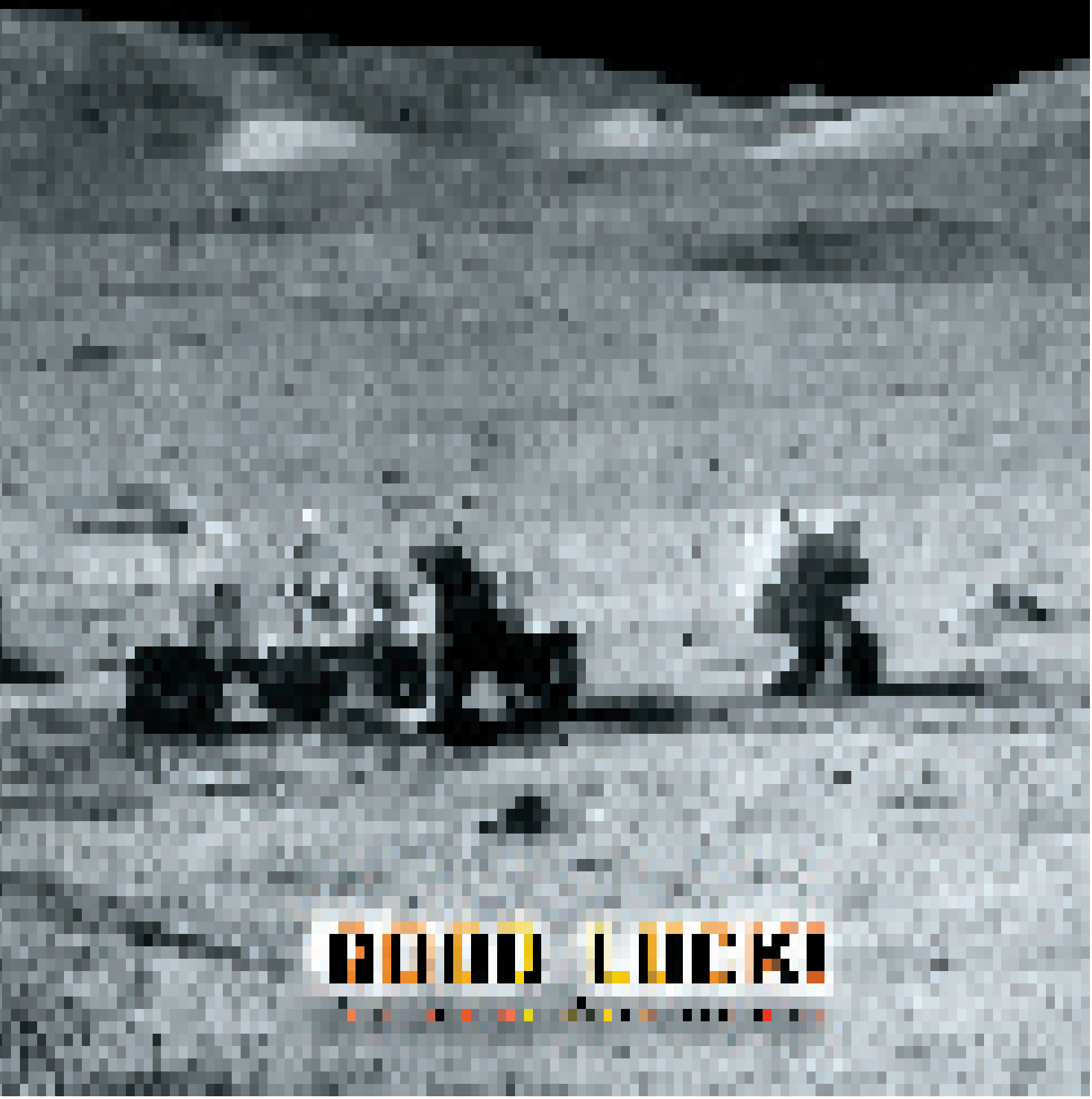
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GOOD LUCK!